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REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND ART

114  
**Horizon**

EDITED BY CYRIL CONNOLLY

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EPILOGUE ON MY HOST THE WORLD BY GEORGE SANTAYANA

WINTER MISERY BY TRUMAN CAPOTE

EXPRESSIONISM BY J. P. HODIN

BRITISH PHILOSOPHY BETWEEN THE WARS BY H. H. PRICE

POEMS BY EDWIN MORGAN, ROY FULLER AND DAVID GASCOYNE

REPRODUCTIONS OF EXPRESSIONIST ART BY ERNST JOSEPHSON  
EDVARD MUNCH AND OSKAR KOKOSCHKA

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VOL. XIX

**109**

MCMXLIX

JANUARY

MONTHLY 2s. 6d.



# A True Story

STEPHEN HUDSON

You have no doubt read the reviews in the English Press praising Stephen Hudson's great work. We are sure that the following excerpts from French reviews will interest readers of *Horizon*.

'... on ne manquera pas de classer Stephen Hudson parmi les grands romanciers contemporains. ... Voilà ce que je trouve magnifique. Tant d'écrivains nous obligent à admirer la manière dont ils s'emparent de la réalité pour l'incliner dans le sens qu'ils veulent: bref, leur talent d'auteurs. Et je sais bien que nous nous laissons faire sans grande résistance. Mais combien est-il plus agréable de nous trouver devant quelqu'un qui a choisi, lui, de s'y plier, à cette réalité, de la suivre sans qu'on le voie jamais intervenir! Au lieu de nous proposer l'image qu'ils se font de la vie, des artistes de cette sorte nous donnent la sensation de la vie.'

*Nouvelles Littéraires*

'Le grand art de l'auteur, M. Stephen Hudson, consiste à insinuer ce qu'il propose. A qui remonte-t-il? Pour une part au Stendhal de *La Chartreuse de Parme*; pour l'autre, au Meredith de *l'Egoïste*. Ce qui n'enlève rien—et loin de là—à son originalité personnelle. Mais la peinture du lac de Côme et de certain caractère de coquette, au tournant de l'âge, reporte invinciblement l'esprit à l'italianisme Henry Beyle, alors que Richard Kurt a en lui pas mal du Willoughby de *l'Egoïste*.'

Léon Daudet dans *Candida*

'Je trouve que Stephen Hudson n'a pas encore en France la place qu'il mérite. Ce n'est pas seulement l'un des plus grands romanciers anglais d'aujourd'hui, c'est l'un des plus grands d'Europe avec Charles Morgan, le romancier platonicien de "*Fontaine*" et le très intellectuel Aldous Huxley, l'auteur de *Contre-Point*, pour ne citer de ses compatriotes que ceux dont l'œuvre m'est quelque peu familière.'

*Vendémiaire*

'Parmi les grands romanciers de l'Angleterre contemporaine, Stephen Hudson occupe une place bien définie. On peut juger Aldous Huxley plus incisif, Virginia Woolf plus raffinée, Wells plus universel, James Stephens plus riche d'imagination—et, dans l'ensemble, de Baring à Priestley, de Joyce à Rosamund Lehmann, la plupart des romanciers britanniques d'aujourd'hui plus originaux, porteurs d'un message plus personnel et créateurs d'une manière plus individualisée, sinon plus neuve. Aucun cependant, à ma connaissance, n'a produit une œuvre offrant un caractère d'équilibre et de délicate perfection comparable à *Une histoire vraie*, ce long roman d'une vie. ...'

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EDITED BY CYRIL CONNOLLY

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## COMMENT

THE Lynskey Tribunal is not a subject which bears any direct relation to a review of literature and art, but there are one or two things which should be said about it which only we militant reactionary aesthetes are capable of saying. The Tribunal is a record of a love affair, and, like most love affairs, it is based on illusion. It records the love which rakish Big Business bears for homely respectable Miss Bureaucracy and the delicate feminine backslidings of that lady (such a nice girl) when wooed by wicked rich financiers with their expense accounts and private dining-rooms. Nobody quite lost their virtue, but the findings will probably disclose that it was a very near thing. To a detached observer what stands out most is the complete and utter dullness of the two conflicting ways of life, both so highly honoured in our society. Which would you rather be? A business man bowling to and fro between London and Manchester, always looking for a fourth at cards, eating, for the sake of trade, innumerable bad luncheons with people you've never met, dining at dog racing tracks with minor politicians, taking them to English seaside hotels for windy negotiations, waiting in ministries for permits to make profits which are at once removed by taxation, swapping Christmas presents, jollying up the wives of public figures—or a servant of the State, poor but enormously respectable, buoyed up by a sense of collective self-righteousness which obliterates every defect, inflated by touched caps and dispatch-cases, and so smothered by the ennui of routine, the gnawings of fear and envy that any old Park Lane jackdaw appearing on the window-sill bedazzles like a peacock?

For two months now the public have absorbed every detail of this confused attempt at seduction—in itself an unsavoury sign, for it shows the growing-up, in our happy little Socialist brotherhood, of exactly the same spirit which informed the Russian purges. Sir Hartley Shawcross in no way resembles Vyshinsky, but his role of public prosecutor carries with it the prestige of a prima donna and one can see arising through the increasing public interest in this affair a relationship between the people and their prosecutor which does not preclude an eventual complicity, as between mob and matador, were these tribunals to replace watching test matches, darts and football as the national sport.



For the spectator, even the newspaper-reader, derives from their consideration a sense of virtue. He feels that he is all out to end corruption in public life: he does not realize that the sentiment he experiences is in reality a form of resentment, a hatred of anybody having any advantages or privileges and ultimately any pleasures which he does not enjoy himself, and that this resentment is a particular ailment of democracies and one which can be just as easily let loose against foreign travel, art exhibitions, long-hair, honeymoon couples, Oscar Wilde, actresses or bottle parties, as against the protagonists at Westminster Hall. There is probably not one of us who could stand up to the searching methods of such an inquiry without revealing much that was ridiculous, a little that was pathetic, and a grain that was criminal in the conduct of our own lives over a long period of time. Let us hope we never become so important in the public eye as to deserve one.

Incidentally the pages of newsprint devoted to the question of the new suit for one or the whisky for another has happily lulled us through the crisis in China, appalling for most of us in its eventual consequences, and through a variety of difficult and unpleasant situations at home and abroad whose nature is only to be gleaned from unsportsmanlike journals like the Paris edition of the *New York Herald*. But it was all over in time for Christmas. Who's next?

★      ★      ★

The HORIZON prize for a short novel has been awarded to Mary MacCarthy, the American writer, for *The Oasis*, which will appear as the complete issue for February. The story was written especially for the competition. One hundred and twenty entries were received. The prize money amounts to two hundred pounds and a dozen bottles of sherry. HORIZON intends to continue during 1949, despite the usual crop of rumours to the contrary, and we hope that an index to the first nine years (1-108) will be available early in the New Year. New subscriptions and renewals are welcome.



Translated from the Anglo-Saxon by

EDWIN MORGAN

## THE RUIN

WONDER holds these walls. Under destiny destruction  
 Castles has split apart; gigantic battlements are crumbling,  
 Roofs sunk in ruin, riven towers fallen,  
 Gates and turrets lost, hoarfrost for mortar,  
 Rain-bastions beaten, cleft, pierced, perished,  
 Eaten away by time. Earth's fist and grasp  
 Holds mason and man, all decayed, departed;  
 The soil grips hard; there a hundred generations  
 Of the people have dwindled and gone. This wall bore well,  
 Moss-grey and reddened, the revolutions of kingdoms,  
 Stoutly withstood tempests. That great gate fell . . .  
 Magnificent rose the fortresses, the lavish swimming-halls,  
 The profuse and lofty glory of spires, the clangour of armies,  
 The drinking-halls crammed with every man's delight,  
 Till that was overturned by steadfast fate.  
 The broad walls were sundered: the plague-days came:  
 The brave men were rapt away by the bereaver,  
 Their war-ramparts razed to desolate foundations,  
 Their cities crumbled down. The restorers lie asleep,  
 Armies of men in the earth. And so those halls are wastes,  
 The once purple gates, and the bricks and wood are lying  
 Scattered with the smashed roofs. Death crushed that place,  
 Struck it flat to the hill, where once many a man  
 Brilliant with gold and adazzle with costliest war-trappings,  
 Happy, proud, and wine-flushed, glittered there in his  
     battle-armour,  
 Gazed over his treasures, on the silver and the curious stones,  
 On the rich goods and possessions, on the precious cut jewels,  
 And on this splendid city of the far-spread kingdom.  
 The stone courts stood then; the hot stream broke  
 Welling strongly through the stone; all was close and sweet  
 In the bright bosom of the walls; and where the baths lay  
 Hot at the heart of the place, that was the best of all. . . .



ROY FULLER

## THE DIVIDED LIFE RE-LIVED

ONCE again the light refracted through the dusty crimson air  
Leaves the spaces of the evening blurred and bare.  
Bats that flicker round the edges of the square Victorian lawn  
Symbolize the bourgeois souls from life withdrawn.

Now the nightingale arouses us upon the withered tree  
With its disappointing, moving melody,  
And against the chalky purple thrown by distant main-road arcs  
Flow the tired suburban leaves like mouldy sparks.

Here the mower furred with grass like filings round a magnet's  
pole,  
Teacups left for ants to make our fortunes droll;  
While we sit and try to think that everything is not too late—  
Sparrows sitting on the sad outfield of fate.

Once and only once we were in touch with brutal, bloody life  
When we got in or kept out of global strife;  
And in desert or in dockyard met our coarser fellow men,  
Wielding friendly gun or scrubber, not our pen.

How we innocently thought that we should be alone no more,  
Linked in death or revolution as in war.  
How completely we have slipped into the same old world of cod,  
Our companions Henry James or cats or God.

Waiting for the evening as the time of passion and of verse,  
Vainly hoping that at both we shan't get worse:  
While outside the demon scientists and rulers of the land  
Pile the bombs like busy crabs pile balls of sand.

And the best that we can wish for is that still the moon will rise  
Enigmatic, cracked and yellow to men's eyes,  
And illuminate the manuscripts of poems that foretold  
All the ruin and survival of the old.



## ROY FULLER

## OBITUARY OF R. FULLER

WE note the death, with small regret,  
 Of one who'd scarcely lived, as yet.  
 Born just before the First World War,  
 Died when there'd only been one more:  
 Between, his life had all been spent  
 In the small-bourgeois element,  
 Sheltered from poverty and hurts.  
 From passion, tragedy and dirt.  
 His infant traumas somewhat worse  
 He would have written better verse,  
 His youth by prudence not so guided  
 His politics been more decided.  
 In the event his life was split  
 And half was lost bewailing it:  
 Part managerial, part poetic—  
 Hard to decide the more pathetic.  
 Avoiding China, Spain and Greece,  
 He passed his adult years of peace  
 In safe unease, with thoughts of doom  
 (As birth is feared inside the womb)—  
 Doom, of his talent and his place,  
 Doom, total, of the human race.  
 This strange concern for fellow creatures  
 Had certainly some pathetic features.  
 He could not understand that death  
 Must be the lot of all with breath,  
 And crudely linked felicity  
 With dying from senile decay,  
 Finding no spiritual worth  
 In guided missiles, torture, dearth.  
 Quite often he was heard to babble  
 'Poets should be intelligible'  
 Or 'What determines human fate  
 Is the class structure of the State'  
 Or 'Freud and Marx and Dickens found—



And so do I—souls not profound.  
 These views were logically a feature  
 Of his rude, egotistic nature—  
 So unemotional and shy  
 Such friends as he retained would cry  
 With baffled boredom, thankful they  
 Were not part of his family.  
 If any bit of him survives  
 It will be that verse which contrives  
 To speak in private symbols for  
 The peaceful caught in public war.  
 For there his wavering faith in man  
 Wavers around some sort of plan,  
 And though foreseeing years of trouble  
 Denies a universal rubble,  
 Discovering in wog and sailor  
 The presages of bourgeois failure.  
 Whether at this we weep or laugh  
 It makes a generous epitaph.

DAVID GASCOYNE

## AN UNSAGACIOUS ANIMAL

OR: THE TRIUMPH OF ART OVER NATURE

The Master of *The Monarch of the Glen*  
 Was making once a sojourn 'neath the roof  
 Of an admiring peer, Lord Rivers, when  
 Occasion rose which put to sternest proof  
 That intrepidity and tact which had  
 Secured for him familiar intercourse  
 With Nature's greatest gentlemen and made  
 Him revered alike by man and horse.  
 For while his fellow-guests one afternoon  
 Were raptly gleaning Landseer's *dicta*, sound  
 Of lawless canine truculence, which soon  
 Became intolerable, made him pound  
 With sudden fist the tea-table, and cry:



'What insolence of importuning cur,  
What rumour as of kennel mutiny  
Is this? Shall Man the Master then defer  
To a hound's illbred fury? Follow me,  
Let's to the stable-yard whence these barks come,  
And I will prove to you that Art may be  
A power more sure than blows to make dogs dumb.  
I who not seldom with forbidding gaze  
Have known how to persuade huge Highland kine  
To emulate the Southern cow's sweet ways,  
And made whole shaggy herds hang on the line,  
Will there, if it amuse you, demonstrate  
A sovereign power yet stronger than the eye's:  
That of the human voice, which is so great  
That it can lions transfix with surprise!'  
Some of the painter's intimates had been  
Already privileged to hear his skill  
In imitation of the less obscene  
Sounds with which animals are wont to fill  
The atmosphere of desert, swamp and glade  
When moved by mealtime longings or by bliss  
To self-expression. For some years he'd made  
The feat his study, and could warble, hiss,  
Roar, bellow, with a realism which  
Was quite astonishing; till in no part  
Of all Victoria's realms was known so rich  
A repertoire of Imitative Art  
As that perfected by the great R.A.  
In view of this, it hardly will seem queer  
To any, that all present there that day  
Excitedly accompanied Landseer  
Out to the court-yard, craning and agog:  
They watched him stride, masterfully serene,  
Towards the kennel out of which the dog  
Surveyed defiantly the crowded scene  
With jaws aslaver and keen fangs exposed;  
Then, not without surprise, they saw him fall  
Down on his knees. It was by some supposed  
This was in order piously to call  
On Providence for aid; but they were wrong.



His aim was to confront the renegade  
 As man to man (or—dog to dog?) Ere long  
 The wretched animal's vile din was made  
 To seem the fretful yap of Pekinese  
 By an appallingly hyenine bark  
 Which evidently made the dog's blood freeze,  
 For his rebellion ceased at once, and stark  
 Terror replaced the murder in his eye.  
 The artful mimicry of Landseer proved  
 So awful that the beast which recently  
 Had rivalled Cerberus himself, now moved  
 With such violence away from the advance  
 Of the superior barker that his chain  
 Snapped, and he crossed the yard swift as a glance,  
 Leap'd o'er the wall, and never was again  
 Seen anywhere on Lord Rivers' estate.  
 Landseer, on rising, found that only one  
 Of those who'd watched him still remained to fête  
 His triumph. 'Twas his host, who breathed: 'Well done,  
 Old fellow, but I think you might have been  
 More like a man, if you know what I mean!'

## GEORGE SANTAYANA

# EPILOGUE ON MY HOST THE WORLD

PERSONS and places people the world; they individuate its parts; and I have devoted my leisure hours to recording some of them that remain alive in my memory. Mine are insignificant recollections: for even when the themes happen to have some importance as persons and places in the great world, it is not at all in that capacity that I prize and describe them. I keep only some old miniature or some little perspective that caught my eye in passing, when the persons perhaps were young and the places empty and not dressed up to receive visitors, as are museums, libraries, ball-rooms, and dinner tables. Those were free glimpses of the world that I could love and could carry away. They were my consolations.



Yet the very contrast between these glimpses, all picturesque and aerial, and the vast obscure inexorable world from which they came forced me gradually to form some notion of that material world also. We were a blue-sea family: our world was that of colonial officials and great merchants. From the beginning I learned to think of the earth as a globe with its surface chiefly salt water, a barren, treacherous and intractable waste for mankind, yet tempting and beautiful and swarming with primitive animals not possible to tame or humanize but sometimes good to eat. In fine, I opened my eyes on the world with the conviction that it was inhuman: not meant for man, but habitable by him, and possible to exploit, with prudence, in innumerable ways—a conviction that everything ever since has confirmed.

One peculiarity was common to all possible satisfactions: they brought something perfect, consummate, final. The sea, after no matter what storms, returned to its equilibrium and placidity; its gamut was definite. Voyages all led to some port. The vastness and violence of nature, in challenging and often decimating mankind, by no means tend to dehumanize it. The quality of attainable good may change and also the conditions for attaining it: but the way is always open, at the right time, for the right sort of animal and for the right sort of mind. Arts have their dates; and the great question is not what age you live in or what art you pursue, but what perfection you can achieve in that art under those circumstances.

The great master of sympathy with nature, in my education, was Lucretius. Romantic poets and philosophers, when they talk of nature, mean only landscape or other impressions due to aerial perspectives, sensuous harmonies of colour or form, or vital intoxications, such as those of riding, seafaring, or mountain-climbing. Nature is loved for heightening self-consciousness and prized for ministering to human comfort and luxury, but is otherwise ignored as contemptible, dead, or non-existent. Or when their temper is hardy and pugnacious, people may require nature as a buffer on which to rain their mighty blows and carve their important initials. Where human strength comes from or what ends human existence might serve, they neither know nor care.

The spirit in me felt itself cast upon this social and political world somewhat like Robinson Crusoe upon his island. We are both creatures of the same Great Nature: and my world, in its



geography and astronomy, like Robinson Crusoe's island, had much more massive and ancient foundations than the small, utterly insecure waif that had been wrecked upon it. In its social and political structure, however, my world was more like Crusoe's energetic person: for my island was densely inhabited; an ugly town, a stunted family, a common school; and the most troublesome and inescapable of its denizens was the particular body in which my spirit found itself rooted; so rooted that it became doubtful whether that body with its feelings and actions was not my true self, rather than this invisible spirit which they oppressed. I seemed to be both; and yet this compulsive and self-tormenting creature called 'Me' was more odious and cruel to the 'I' within than were the sea and sky, the woods and mountains, or the very cities and crowds of people that this animal 'Me' moved among: for the spirit in me was happy and free ranging through that world, but troubled and captive in its close biological integument.

This is the double conflict, the social opposition and the moral agony, that spirit suffers by being incarnate; and yet if it were not incarnate it could not be individual, with a station in space and time, a language and special perspectives over nature and history. Indeed, if not incarnate, spirit could not *exist* at all or be the inner light and perpetual witness of *life* in its dramatic vicissitudes.

If it be the fate of all spirit to live in a special body and a special age, and yet, for its vocation and proper life, to be addressed from that centre to all life and to all being, I can understand why I have been more sensible to this plight and to this mission than were most of my contemporaries. For by chance I was a foreigner where I was educated; and although the new language and customs interested me and gave me no serious trouble, yet speculatively and emotionally, especially in regard to religion, the world around me was utterly undigestible.

The times also were moving rapidly and exultingly, towards what for me was chaos and universal triviality. At first these discords sounded like distant thunder. Externally they were not yet violent; the world smiled in my eyes as I came to manhood, and the beauties and dignity of the past made the present unimportant. And as the feeling of being a stranger and an exile by nature as well as by accident grew upon me in time, it came to be almost a point of pride; some people may have thought it an affectation. It was not that; I have always admired the normal child of his



ge and country. My case was humanly unfortunate and involved many defects; yet it opened to me another vocation, not better (I admit no absolute standards) but more speculative, freer, juster, and for me, happier.

## II

I had always dreamt of travel, and it was oftenest in the voluntary, interested, appreciative role of the traveller that I felt myself most honest in my dealings with my environment. The world was My Host; I was a temporary guest in his busy and animated establishment. We met as strangers; yet each had generic and well-grounded ideas of what could be expected of the other. First impressions made these expectations more precise; the inn was habitable; the guest was presumably solvent. We might prove mutually useful. My Host and I could become friends, diplomatically; but we were not akin in either our interests or our powers.

The normal economy of an innkeeper, though incidentally and in a measure it supplies the wants of his guests, knows nothing of their private moral economy. Their tastes in wines, in service, or in music may entirely outrun or contradict his long-established practice, which he will impose on his guests with all the authority of a landlord; and there may not be another inn in the place, or only worse ones. The guest has no right to demand what is not provided. He must be thankful for any little concessions that may be made to his personal tastes, if he is tactful and moderate in his requirements, pays his bills promptly, and gives decent tips.

Such at least was the case in the nineteenth century when the world made itself pleasant to the traveller; and not to rich travellers only but to the most modest, and even to the very poor in their little purchases and popular feasts. Personal freedom produced a certain dignity and good humour even in bargaining; for to buy and sell, to patronize a shop or a boarding-house, was an act of kindness; and bills, at least in civilly commercial England, were always receipted 'with thanks'. Having lived a peaceful, independent life, free from hardship or misfortune, I have found it easy to conform externally with the mechanism of society. Matter has been kind to me, and I am a lover of matter. Not only aesthetically but dynamically, as felt by Lucretius, nature to me is a welcome presence; and modern progress in mechanical invention



and industrial luxury has excited joyously my materialistic imagination, as it did prophetically that of Bacon.

Moreover, I inherited from my father a bond with matter which Bacon and Lucretius probably did not feel: the love of employing leisure in small mechanical occupations. I should never have read and written so much if the physical side of these employments had not been congenial to me and rich in a quiet happiness. Any common surroundings and any commonplace people pleased me well enough; it was only when sugary rapture was demanded about them or by them, as happened almost everywhere in my youth, that my stomach rose in radical protest. Then I discovered how much the human world of my time had become the enemy of spirit and therefore of its own light and peace.

How had this happened? Not at all as lovers of antiquity or of the Middle Ages seem to think, because of mechanical inventions or natural sciences or loss of Christian faith. These transformations might all have occurred in the normal growth of society. Variety in cultures is not due to aberrations any more than is the variety of animal species. But there may be aberration in any species or any culture when it becomes *vicious*; that is, when it forms habits destructive of its health and of its ability to prosper in its environment.

Now modern sciences and inventions are not vicious in this sense; on the contrary, they bring notable additions to human *virtù*. And I think that the Renaissance, with the historical learning and humanism which it fostered, was also a great gain for human happiness and self-knowledge. Of this the surface of the modern world during my youth gave continual evidence, in spite of an undercurrent of unrest and disaffection sometimes heard rumbling below. My Host's establishment made a brave appearance; and I was particularly conscious of many new facilities of travel, breadth of information, and cosmopolitan convenience and luxury. Though there was no longer any dignity in manners, or much distinction in costume, fashion had not lost all its charm. In literature and the fine arts talent could give pleasure by its expertness, if not by its taste or savour. I have described how, in Boston and in England, I sometimes sipped the rim of the plutocratic cup; and this was a real pleasure, because beneath the delicacy of the material feast there was a lot of shrewd experience in that society, and of placid kindness.



There was also another cosmopolitan circle, less select and less worldly, but no less entertaining and no less subject to fashion and to ironical gossip, the Intellectuals, into whose company I was sometimes drawn. I was officially one of them, yet they felt in their bones that I might be secretly a traitor.

'Ah, yes,' cried a distinguished Jesuit recently when I was casually mentioned, 'he is the *poetical* atheist.' And an Italian professor, also a Catholic but tinged with German idealism, remarked of me: 'The trouble with him is that he has never succeeded in outgrowing materialism'. Finally a faithful die-hard of British psychologism, asked why I was overlooked among contemporary philosophers, replied: 'Because he has no originality. Everything in him is drawn from Plato and Leibniz.'

This critical band is democratic in that it recognizes no official authority and lets fluid public opinion carry the day; yet it is, on principle, in each man, private and independent in judgement. Few, however, have much time to read originals or to study facts. Leaders and busybodies must obey their momentum. A personal reaction on what other people say is socially sufficient; it will do for the press; and it will corroborate the critic's opinion in his own eyes.

I cannot overcome a settled distrust of merely intellectual accomplishment, militant in the void. I prefer common virtues and current beliefs, even if intellectually prejudiced and simple, when the great generative order of nature has bred them, and lent them its weight and honesty. For I do not rebel in the least at political and moral mutations when this same generative order brings them about spontaneously; for it is then on the side of change that clear intelligence discerns the lesser danger and the wider interests. I should have loved the Gracchi; but not the belated Cato or the belated Brutus. All four were martyrs; but the first two spoke for the poor, for the suffering half of the people, oppressed by a short-sighted power that neglected its responsibilities; while the last two were conceited idealogues, jealous of their traditional rights, and utterly blind to destiny.

If I were not too old and could venture to write in French, I should compose a short history of *Les Faux Pas de la Philosophie*; by which title I should not refer to *innocent* errors, with which all human speculation must be infected, nor to the symbolic or mythological form of the wisest wisdom, but only to militant



heresies and self-contradictions due to wilful conceit, individual or tribal, verbal or moral—and there is little in European philosophy that is not infected with these *unnecessary* errors. Let the reader compose his own catalogue of these blind alleys explored by the ancients and by the moderns; I will limit myself to the first and principal *faux pas* that the world has seemed to me to have taken in my time.

### III

The contemporary world has turned its back on the attempt and even on the desire to live reasonably. The two great wars of the twentieth century were adventures in enthusiastic unreason. They were inspired by unnecessary and impracticable ambitions; and the 'League' and the 'United Nations' feebly set up by the victors were so irrationally conceived that they at once reduced their victory to a stalemate. What is required for living rationally? I think the conditions may be reduced to two: first, self-knowledge, the Socratic key to wisdom; and second, sufficient knowledge of the world to perceive what alternatives are open to you and which of them are favourable to your true interests.

Now the contemporary world has plenty of knowledge of nature for its purposes, but its purposes show a positively insane abandonment of its true interests. You may say that the proletariat knows its interests perfectly: they are to work less and to earn more. Those are indeed its interests so long as it remains a proletariat; but to be a proletariat is an inhuman condition. Proletarians are human beings, and their first interest is to have a home, a family, a chosen trade and freedom in practising it. And more particularly a man's true interest may exceptionally be not to have those things, but to wander alone like the rhinoceros; or perhaps to have a very special kind of home, family, and occupation. There must be freedom of movement and vocation. There must be *Lebensraum* for the spirit.

There have always been beggars and paupers in the world, because there is bound to be a margin of the unfit—too bad or too good—to keep in step with any well-organized society; but that the great body of mankind should sink into a proletariat has been an unhappy effect of the monstrous growth of cities, made possible by the concentration of trade and the multiplication of industries, mechanized and swelling into monopolies.



The natural state of mankind, before foreign conquerors dominate it or native ideologues reform it, is full of incidental evils; prophets have ample cause for special denunciations and warnings; yet there is, as in all animal economy, a certain nucleus of self-preserving instincts and habits—a normal constitution of society. Nature with its gods is their landlord of whose fields and woods they are local and temporary tenants; and with this invincible power they make prudent and far-seeing covenants. They know what is for their good and by what arts it might be secured. They live by agriculture, the hunting and breeding of animals, and such domestic arts as their climate and taste lead them to cultivate; and when a quarrel arises among them, or with strangers, they battle to preserve or to restore their free life, without more ambitious intentions. They are materially and morally rooted in the earth, bred in one land and one city. They are *civilized*. Wandering nations, with nothing of their own and working havoc wherever they go, are *barbarians*. Such 'Barbarians' were the proletariat of antiquity. When they occupied some civilized region without exterminating the natives, and established in the old strongholds a permanent foreign domination, they became half-civilized themselves, without shedding altogether the predatory and adventurous practices of their ancestors. This is the compound origin and nature of modern Western governments.

Varied, picturesque, and romantic mixtures of civilization beneath and barbarism above have filled the history of Christendom, and produced beautiful transient arts, in which there were too little wisdom and too much fancy and fashion: think of Gothic architecture, or of manners, dress, poetry, and philosophy from the Middle Ages to our day. Civilization had become more enterprising, plastic, and irresponsible, while barbarism seemed to retreat into sports, and into legal extravagances in thought and action. Intellectual chaos and political folly could thus come to co-exist strangely with an irresistible dominance of mechanical industry. The science that served this industrial progress by no means brought moral enlightenment. It merely enlarged acquaintance with phenomena and enabled clever inventors to construct all sorts of useful or superfluous machines. At first perhaps it was expected that science would make all mankind both rich and free from material cares (two contradictory hopes) and would at the same time enlighten them at last about the nature of things,



including their own nature, so that adequate practical wisdom would be secured together with fabulous material well-being.

This is the dream of the moderns, on which I found My Host boastfully running his establishment. He expected his guests also to act accordingly and to befuddle and jollify one another, so that all should convince themselves that they were perfectly happy and should advertise their Host's business wherever they went. Such forced enterprise, forced confidence, and forced satisfaction would never have sprung from domestic arts or common knowledge spontaneously extended. It was all artificial and strained, marking the inhuman domination of some militant class or sect. This society lacked altogether that essential trait of rational living; to have a clear, sanctioned, ultimate aim. The cry was for vacant freedom and indeterminate progress: *Vorwärts! Avanti! Onward! Full speed ahead!* without asking whether directly before you was not a bottomless pit.

This has been the peculiar malady of my own times. I saw the outbreak of it in my boyhood, and I have lived to see what seemed clear symptoms of its end. The great merchants of my parents' youth had known nothing of it on their blue-sea voyages round Cape Horn or the Cape of Good Hope. Their good hope had been to amass a great fortune in fifteen or twenty years, and return home to bring up a blooming family in splendour and peace. They foresaw an orderly diffused well-being spreading out from them over all mankind. The fountains of happiness were ready to flow in every heart and mind if only people were suffered to have their own way materially and socially. That the masses would crowd out, exclude, indoctrinate, enslave, and destroy one another could not cross their genial and innocent minds, as they skimmed those immense oceans in their tight, strictly disciplined, white-sailed little craft.

Alas! The healthy growth of science and commerce had been crossed, long before the rise of the great merchants, by an insidious moral and political revolution. From the earliest times there have been militant spirits not content with inevitable changes and with occasional wars between neighbouring states, not usually wars of conquest or eternal hatred, but collisions in readjusting the political equilibrium between nations when their actual relations were no longer the same. Indeed, the tragic causes of conflict and ruin in civilizations are fundamentally internal to each society.



A whole city or state may sometimes be destroyed, like Carthage: but history, then, comes to an end for that particular society, and the others continue their course as if their vanished rival had never existed. This course may be cut short, however, by internal disruption and suicidal revolutions.

Every generation is born as ignorant and wilful as the first man; and when tradition has lost its obvious fitness or numinous authority, eager minds will revert without knowing it to every false hope and blind alley that tempted their predecessors long since buried under layer upon layer of ruins. And these eager minds may easily become leaders; for society is never perfect: grievances and misfortunes perpetually breed rebellion in the oppressed heart; and the eloquent imagination of youth and of indignation will find the right words to blow the discontent, always smouldering, into sudden flame. Often things as they are become intolerable; there must be insurrection at any cost, as when the established order is not only casually oppressive but ideally perverse and due to some previous epidemic of militant madness become constitutional. Against that domination, established in wilful indifference to the true good of man and to his possibilities, any political nostrum, proposed with the same rashness, will be accepted with the same faith. Thus the blind in extirpating the mad may plant a new madness.

#### IV

That this is the present state of the world everyone can see by looking about him or reading the newspapers; but I think that the elements in this crisis have been working in the body politic for ages; ever since the Reformation, not to say since the age of the Greek Sophists and of Socrates. For the virulent cause of this long fever is subjectivism, egotism, conceit of mind. Not that culture of the conscience and even the logical refinements of dialectic are anything but good for the mind itself and for moral self-knowledge, which is one of the two conditions that I have assigned to political sanity; but the same logical arts are fatal if they are used to construct, by way of a moral fable, an anthropomorphic picture of the universe given out for scientific truth and imposed on mankind by propaganda, by threats, and by persecution. And this militant method of reforming mankind by misrepresenting their



capacities and their place in the universe is no merely ancient or medieval delusion. It is the official and intolerant method of our most zealous contemporary prophets and reformers. Barbarism has adopted the weapons of flattery and prophecy. Merciless irrational ambition has borrowed the language of brotherly love.

The very fact, however, that these evils have deep roots and have long existed without destroying Western civilization, and even have stimulated its contrary virtues and confused arts—this very fact seems to me to counsel calmness in contemplating the future. Those who look for a panacea will not find it. Those who advise resignation to a life of industrial slavery (because spiritual virtues may be cultivated by a slave, like Epictetus, more easily perhaps than by rich men) are surrendering the political future to an artificial militant regime that cannot last unaltered for a decade anywhere, and could hardly last a day if by military force it were ever made universal. The fanaticism of all parties must be allowed to burn down to ashes, like a fire out of control. If it survives, it will be only because it will have humanized itself, reduced its dogmas to harmless metaphors, and sunk down a taproot, to feed it, into the dark damp depths of mother earth. The economy of nature includes all particular movements, combines and transforms them all, but never diverts its wider processes, to render them obedient to the prescriptions of human rhetoric. Things have their day, and their beauties in that day. It would be preposterous to expect any one civilization to last for ever.

Had it happened in my time (as by chance it did happen) that my landlord should give me notice that he was about to pull down his roof over my head, I might have been a little troubled for a moment; but presently I should have begun to look for other lodgings not without a certain curious pleasure, and probably should have found some (as I did, and better ones) in which to end my days. So, I am confident, will the travelling Spirit do—this ever renewed witness, victim, and judge of existence, divine yet born of woman. Obediently it will learn other affections in other places, unite other friends, and divide other peoples; and the failure of over-exact hopes and overweening ambitions will not prevent spirit from continually turning the passing virtues and sorrows of nature into glimpses of eternal truth.

*[With acknowledgements to the Editor of the 'Atlantic Monthly']*



## TRUMAN CAPOTE

# MASTER MISERY

HER high heels, clacking across the marble foyer, made her think of ice-cubes rattling in a glass, and the flowers, those autumn chrysanthemums in the urn at the entrance, if touched they would shatter, splinter, she was sure, into frozen dust; yet the house was warm, even somewhat overheated, but cold, and Sylvia shivered, but cold, like the snowy swollen wastes of the secretary's face: Miss Mozart, who dressed all in white, as though she were a nurse. Perhaps she really was; that, of course, could be the answer: Mr. Revercomb, you are mad, and this is your nurse: she thought about it for a moment: well, no. And now the butler brought her scarf. His beauty touched her: slender, so gentle, a Negro with freckled skin and reddish, unreflecting eyes. As he opened the door, Miss Mozart appeared, her starched uniform rustling dryly in the hall: 'We hope you will return,' she said, and handed Sylvia a sealed envelope, 'Mr. Revercomb was most particularly pleased'.

Outside dusk was falling like blue flakes, and Sylvia walked cross-town along the November streets until she reached the lonely upper reaches of Fifth Avenue. It occurred to her then that she might walk home through the park: an act of defiance almost, for Henry and Estelle, always insistent of their city wisdom, had said over and again, 'Sylvia, you have no idea how dangerous it is, walking in the park after dark: look what happened to Myrtle Calisher. This isn't Easton, honey.' That was the other thing they said. And said. God, she was sick of it. Still, and aside from a few of the other typists at Snug Fare, an underwear company for which she worked, who else in New York did she know? Oh, it would be all right if only she did not have to live with them, if she could afford somewhere a small room of her own; but there in that chintz-cramped apartment she sometimes felt she would choke them both. And why had she come to New York? For whatever reason, and it was indeed becoming vague, a principal cause of leaving Easton had been to rid herself of Henry and Estelle; or rather, their counterparts, though in point of fact Estelle was actually from Easton, a town north of Cincinnati. She and Sylvia had grown up together. The real trouble with Henry and Estelle



was that they were so excruciatingly married: namby-pamby bootsy-totsy! and everything had a name: the telephone was Tinkling Tillie, the sofa Our Nelle, the bed Big Bear; yes, and what about those His-Her towels, those He-She pillows? Enough to drive you loony. 'Loony!' she said aloud, the quiet park erasing her voice. It was lovely now, and she was right to have walked here, with wind moving through the leaves, and globe lamps, freshly aglow, kindling the chalk drawings of children, pink birds, blue arrows, green hearts. But suddenly, like a pair of obscene words, there appeared on the path two boys: pimple-faced, grinning, they loomed in the dusk like menacing flames, and Sylvia, passing them, felt a burning all through her, quite as though she'd brushed fire. They turned and followed her past a deserted playground, one of them bump-bumping a stick along an iron fence, the other whistling: these two sounds accumulated around her like the gathering roar of an oncoming engine, and when one of the boys, with a laugh, called 'Hey, whatsa hurry?' her mouth twisted for breath: 'Don't,' she thought, thinking to throw down her purse and run. At that moment, however, a man walking a dog came up a sidepath, and she followed at his heels to the exit. Wouldn't they feel gratified, Henry and Estelle, wouldn't they we-told-you-so if she were to tell them? And, what is more, Estelle would write it home and the next thing you knew it would be all over Easton that she'd been raped in Central Park. She spent the rest of the way home despising New York: anonymity, its virtuous terror; and the speaking drain-pipe, all-night light, ceaseless footfall, subway corridor, numbered door (3C).

'Shh, honey,' Estelle said, sidling out of the kitchen, 'Bootsy's doing his homework.' Sure enough, Henry, a law student at Columbia, was hunched over his books in the living-room, and Sylvia, at Estelle's request, took off her shoes before tiptoeing through. Once inside her room, she threw herself on the bed and put her hands over her eyes. Had today really happened? Miss Mozart and Mr. Revercomb, were they really there in the tall house on Seventy-eighth Street?

'So, honey, what happened today?' Estelle had entered without knocking.

Sylvia sat up on her elbow. 'Nothing. Except that I typed ninety-seven letters.'

'About what, honey?' asked Estelle, using Sylvia's hairbrush.



'Oh, hell, what do you suppose? SnugFare, the shorts that safely support our leaders of Science and Industry.'

'Gee, honey, don't sound so cross. I don't know what's wrong with you sometimes. You sound so cross. Ouch! Why don't you get a new brush: this one's just knotted with hair. . . '

'Mostly yours.'

'What did you say?'

'Skip it.'

'Oh, I thought you said something. Anyway, like I was saying, I wish you didn't have to go to that office and come home every day feeling cross and out-of-sorts. Personally, and I said this to Bootsy just last night and he agreed with me one hundred per cent, I said, "Bootsy, I think Sylvia ought to get married: a girl high-strung like that needs her tensions relaxed". There's no earthly reason why you shouldn't: I mean, maybe you're not pretty in the ordinary sense, but you have beautiful eyes, and an intelligent, really sincere look. In fact you're the sort of girl any professional man would be lucky to get. And I should think you would want to . . . look what a different person I am since I married Henry: doesn't it make you lonesome seeing how happy we are? I'm here to tell you, honey, that there is nothing like lying in bed at night with a man's arms around you and . . . '

'Estelle! For Christ's sake!' Sylvia sat bolt upright in bed, anger on her cheeks like rouge. But after a moment she bit her lip, and lowered her eyelids. 'I'm sorry,' she said, 'I didn't mean to shout. Only I wish you wouldn't talk like that.'

'It's all right,' said Estelle, smiling in a dumb puzzled way. Then she went over and gave Sylvia a kiss. 'I understand, honey. It's just that you're plain worn out. And I'll bet you haven't had anything to eat either. Come on in the kitchen and I'll scramble you some eggs.'

When Estelle set the eggs before her, Sylvia felt quite ashamed; after all, Estelle was trying to be nice; and so then, as though to make it all up, she said: 'Something did happen today'.

Estelle sat down across from her with a cup of coffee, and Sylvia went on: 'I don't know how to tell about it. It's so very odd. But . . . well, I had lunch at the Automat today, and I had to share the table with these three men. I might as well have been invisible because they talked about the most personal things. One of the men said his girl friend was going to have a baby and he didn't



know where he was going to get the money to do anything about it. So one of the other men asked him why didn't he sell something. He said he didn't have anything to sell. Whereupon the third man (he was rather delicate and didn't look as if he belonged with the others) said, yes, there was something he could sell: *dreams*. Even I laughed, but the man shook his head and said very seriously: no, it was perfectly true, his wife's aunt, Miss Mozart, worked for a rich man who bought dreams, regular night-time dreams—from anybody. And he wrote down the man's name and address and gave it to his friend; but the man simply left it lying on the table: it was too crazy for him, he said.'

'Me, too,' Estelle put in, a little righteously.

'I don't know,' said Sylvia, lighting a cigarette. 'But I couldn't get it out of my head. The name written on the paper was A. F. Revercomb and the address was on East Seventy-eighth Street. I only glanced at it for a moment, but it was . . . I don't know, I couldn't seem to forget it: it was beginning to give me a headache. So I left the office early . . .'

Slowly, and with emphasis, Estelle put down her coffee cup. 'Honey, listen; you don't mean you went to see him, this Revercomb nut?'

'I didn't mean to,' she said, immediately embarrassed. To try and tell about it she now realized was a mistake. Estelle had no imagination; she would never understand. So her eyes narrowed, the way they always did when she composed a lie. 'And as a matter of fact I didn't,' she said flatly. 'I started to; but then I realized how silly it was, and went for a walk instead.'

'That was sensible of you,' said Estelle, as she began stacking dishes in the kitchen sink. 'Imagine what might have happened. Buying dreams! Whoever heard? Uh uh, honey, this sure isn't Easton.'

Before retiring, Sylvia took a seconal, something she seldom did; but she knew otherwise she would never rest, not with her mind so nimble and somersaulting; then, too, she felt a curious sadness, a sense of loss, as though she'd been the victim of some real or even moral theft, as though, in fact, the boys encountered in the park had snatched (abruptly she switched on the light) her purse. The envelope Miss Mozart had handed her: it was in the purse, and until now she had forgotten it. She tore it open. Inside there was a blue note folded around a bill; on the note there was



written: *In payment of one dream, \$5.* And now she believed it; it was true, and she had sold Mr. Revercomb a dream: could it be really so simple as that? She laughed a little as she turned off the light again. If she were to sell a dream only twice a week, think of what she could do: a place somewhere all her own, she thought, deepening toward sleep; ease like firelight wavered over her, and there came the moment of twilit lantern slides, deeply deeper. His lips, his arms: telescoped, descending; and distastefully she kicked away the blanket. Were these cold man-arms the arms Estelle had spoken of? Mr. Revercomb's lips brushed her ear as he leaned far into her sleep: 'Tell me!' he whispered.

It was a week before she saw him again, a Sunday afternoon in early December. She'd left the apartment intending to see a movie, but somehow, and as though it had happened without her knowledge, she found herself on Madison Avenue, two blocks from Mr. Revercomb's. It was a cold silver-skied day with winds sharp and catching as hollyhock; in store windows icicles of Christmas tinsel twinkled amid mounds of sequined snow: all to Sylvia's distress, for she hated holidays, those times when one is most alone. In one window she saw a spectacle which made her stop still. It was a life-sized, mechanical Santa Claus; slapping his stomach, he rocked back and forth in a frenzy of electrical mirth: you could hear beyond the thick glass his squeaky uproarious laughter. The longer she watched the more evil he seemed until finally, with a shudder, she turned and made her way into the street of Mr. Revercomb's house. It was, from the outside, an ordinary town house, perhaps a trifle less polished, less imposing than some others, but relatively grand all the same. Winter-withered ivy writhed about the leaded window-panes and trailed in octopus ropes over the door; at the sides of the door were two small stone lions with blind chipped eyes. Sylvia took a breath, then rang the bell. Mr. Revercomb's pale and charming Negro recognized her with a courteous smile.

On the previous visit the parlour in which she had awaited her audience with Mr. Revercomb had been empty except for herself. This time there were others present, women of several appearances, and an excessively nervous, gnat-eyed young man: had this group been what it resembled, namely patients in a doctor's ante-room, he would have seemed either an expectant father or a victim of St. Vitus. Sylvia was seated next to him, and his fidgety



eyes unbuttoned her rapidly: whatever he saw apparently intrigued him very little, and Sylvia was grateful when he went back to his twitchy preoccupations. Gradually, though, she became conscious of how interested in her the assemblage seemed: in the dim, doubtful light of the plant-filled room their gazes were more rigid than the chairs upon which they sat; one woman was particularly relentless. Ordinarily her face would have had a soft, commonplace sweetness, but now, watching Sylvia, it was ugly with distrust, jealousy. As though trying to tame some creature which might suddenly spring full-fanged, she sat stroking a flea-bitten neck fur, her stare continuing its assault until the earthquake footstep of Miss Mozart was heard in the hall: immediately, and like frightened students, the group, separating into their individual identities, came to attention. 'You, Mr. Pocker,' accused Miss Mozart, 'you're next!' And Mr. Pocker, wringing his hands, jittering his eyes, followed after her. In the dusk-room the gathering settled again like sun-motes.

It began then to rain; melting window reflections quivered on the walls, and Mr. Revercomb's young butler, seeping through the room, stirred a fire in the grate, set tea things upon a table. Sylvia, nearest the fire, felt drowsy with warmth and the noise of rain; her head tilted sideways, she closed her eyes, neither asleep nor really awake. For a long while only the crystal swingings of a clock scratched the polished silence of Mr. Revercomb's house. And then, abruptly, there was an enormous commotion in the hall, capsizing the room into a fury of sound: a bull-deep voice vulgar as red roared out: 'Stop Oreilly? The ballet butler and who else?' The owner of this voice, a tub-shaped, brick-coloured little man, shoved his way to the parlour threshold, where he stood drunkenly see-sawing from foot to foot. 'Well, well, well,' he said, his gin-hoarse voice descending the scale, 'and all these ladies before me? But Oreilly is a gentleman, Oreilly waits his turn.'

'Not here, he doesn't,' said Miss Mozart, stealing up behind him and seizing him sternly by the collar. His face went even redder and his eyes bubbled out. 'You're choking me,' he gasped, but Miss Mozart, whose green-pale hands were as strong as oak roots, jerked his tie still tighter, and propelled him toward the door, which presently slammed with shattering effect: a teacup tinkled, and dry dahlia leaves tumbled from their heights. The



lady with the fur slipped an aspirin in her mouth: 'Disgusting,' she said, and the others, all except Sylvia, laughed delicately, admiringly, as Miss Mozart strode past dusting her hands.

It was raining thick and darkly when Sylvia left Mr. Revercomb's. She looked around the desolate street for a taxi; there was nothing, however, and no one; yes, someone, the drunk man who had caused the disturbance: like a lonely city child he was leaning against a parked car and bouncing a rubber ball up and down. 'Lookit, kid,' he said to Sylvia, 'lookit, I just found this ball. Do you suppose that means good luck?' Sylvia smiled at him; for all his bravado she thought him rather harmless, and there was a quality in his face, some grinning sadness suggesting a clown minus make-up. Juggling his ball, he skipped along after her as she headed toward Madison Avenue. 'I'll bet I made a fool of myself in there,' he said. 'When I do things like that I just want to sit down and cry.' Standing so long in the rain seemed to have sobered him considerably. 'But she ought not to have choked me that way; damn, she's too rough. I've known some rough women: my sister Berenice could brand the wildest bull; but that other one, she's the roughest of the lot. Mark Oreilly's word, she's going to end up in the electric chair,' he said, and smacked his lips. 'They've got no cause to treat me like that. It's every bit his fault anyhow. I didn't have an awful lot to begin with, but then he took it every bit, and now I've got niente, kid, niente.'

'That's too bad,' said Sylvia, though she did not know what she was being sympathetic about. 'Are you a clown, Mr. Oreilly?'

'Was,' he said.

By this time they had reached the avenue, but Sylvia did not even look for a taxi; she wanted to walk on in the rain with the man who had been a clown. 'When I was a little girl I only liked clown dolls,' she told him; 'my room at home was like a circus.'

'I've been other things besides a clown. I have sold insurance also.'

'Oh!' said Sylvia, disappointed. 'And what do you do now?'

Oreilly chuckled and threw his ball especially high; after the catch his head still remained tilted upward: 'I watch the sky,' he said. 'There I am with my suitcase travelling through the blue: it's where you travel when you've got no place else to go. But what do I do on this planet? I have stolen, begged, and sold my dreams...all for purposes of whisky. A man cannot travel in the



blue without a bottle. Which brings us to a point: how'd you take it, baby, if I asked for the loan of a dollar?'

'I'd take it fine,' Sylvia replied, and paused, uncertain of what she'd say next. They wandered along so slowly, the stiff rain enclosing them like an insulating pressure; it was as though she were walking with a childhood doll, one grown miraculous and capable; she reached and held his hand: dear clown travelling in the blue. 'But I haven't got a dollar. All I've got is seventy cents.'

'No hard feelings,' said Oreilly. 'But honest, is that the kind of money he's paying nowadays?'

Sylvia knew whom he meant. 'No, no... as a matter of fact, I didn't sell him a dream.' She made no attempt to explain: she didn't understand it herself. Confronting the greying invisibility of Mr. Revercomb (impeccable, exact as a scale, surrounded in a cologne of clinical odours; flat grey eyes planted like seed in the anonymity of his face and sealed within steel-dull lenses) she could not remember a dream, and so she told of two thieves who had chased her through the park and in and out among the swings of a playground. "'Stop," he said for me to stop; "there are dreams and dreams," he said, "but that is not a real one, that is one you are making up." Now how do you suppose he knew that? So I told him another dream; it was about him, of how he held me in the night with balloons rising and moons falling all around. He said he was not interested in dreams concerning himself. Miss Mozart, who transcribed the dreams in shorthand, was told to call the next person. I don't think I will go back there again,' she said.

'You will,' said Oreilly. 'Look at me; even I go back, and he has long since finished with me, Master Misery.'

'Master Misery? Why do you call him that?'

They had reached the corner where the maniacal Santa Claus rocked and bellowed: his laughter echoed in the rainy, squeaking street, and a shadow of him swayed in the rainbow lights of the pavement. Oreilly, turning his back upon the Santa Claus, smiled and said: 'I call him Master Misery on account of that's who he is. Master Misery. Only maybe you call him something else; anyway, he is the same fellow, and you must've known him; all mothers tell their kids about him; he lives in hollows of trees, he comes down chimneys late at night, he lurks in graveyards and you can hear his step in the attic. The sonofabitch, he is a thief and a threat: he will take everything you have and end by leaving you nothing,



not even a dream. Boo!' he shouted, and laughed louder than Santa Claus. 'Now do you know who he is?'

Sylvia nodded. 'I know who he is. My family called him something else. But I can't remember what. It was so long ago.'

'But you remember him?'

'Yes, I remember him.'

'Then call him Master Misery,' he said and, bouncing his ball, walked away from her. 'Master Misery,' his voice trailed to a mere moth of sound, 'Mas-ter Mis-er-y . . .'

★            ★            ★

It was hard to look at Estelle, for she was in front of a window, and the window was filled with windy sun, which hurt Sylvia's eyes, and the glass rattled, which hurt her head. Also, Estelle was lecturing. Her nasal voice sounded as though her throat were a depositor for rusty razor blades. 'I wish you could see yourself,' she was saying. Or was that something she'd said a long while back. Never mind. 'I don't know what's happened to you: I'll bet you don't weigh a hundred pounds, I can see every bone and vein, and your hair! You look like a poodle.'

Sylvia passed a hand over her forehead. 'What time is it, Estelle?'

'It's four,' she said, interrupting herself long enough to look at her watch. 'But where is your watch?'

'I sold it,' said Sylvia, too tired to lie. It did not matter. She had sold so many things, including her beaver coat and gold-mesh evening bag.

Estelle shook her head. 'I give up, honey, I plain give up. And that was the watch your mother gave you for graduation. It's a shame,' she said, and made an old-maid noise with her mouth, 'a pity and a shame. I'll never understand why you left us; that is your business, I'm sure; only how could you have left us for this . . . this . . .'

'Dump,' supplied Sylvia, using the word advisedly. It was a furnished room in the east sixties between Second and Third Avenues. Large enough for a daybed and a splintery old bureau with a mirror like a cataracted eye, it had one window, which looked out on a vast vacant lot (you could hear the tough afternoon voices of desperate running boys) and in the distance, like an exclamation point for the skyline, there was the black smoke-stack



of a factory. This smoke-stack occurred frequently in her dreams; it never failed to arouse Miss Mozart. 'Phallic, phallic,' she would mutter, glancing up from her shorthand. The floor of the room was a garbage pail of books begun but never finished, antique newspapers, even orange hulls, fruit cores, underwear, a spilled powder box.

Estelle kicked her way through this trash, and sat down on the daybed. 'Honey, you don't know, but I've been worried crazy. I mean I've got pride and all that, and if you don't like me, well O.K.; but you've got no right to stay away like this and not let me hear from you in over a month. So today I said to Bootsy, "Bootsy, I've got a feeling something terrible has happened to Sylvia". You can imagine how I felt when I called your office and they told me you hadn't worked there for the last four weeks. What happened, were you fired?'

'Yes, I was fired.' Sylvia began to sit up. 'Please, Estelle . . . I've got to get ready; I've got an appointment.'

'Be still. You're not going anywhere till I know what's wrong. The landlady downstairs told me you were found sleep-walking . . .'

'What do you mean, talking to her? Why are you spying on me?'

Estelle's eyes puckered, as though she were going to cry. She put her hand over Sylvia's and petted it gently. 'Tell me, honey, is it because of a man?'

'It's because of a man, yes,' said Sylvia, laughter at the edge of her voice.

'You should have come to me before,' Estelle sighed. 'I know about men. That is nothing for you to be ashamed of. A man can have a way with a woman that kind of makes her forget everything else. If Henry wasn't the fine upstanding potential lawyer that he is, why, I would still love him, and do things for him that before I knew what it was like to be with a man would have seemed shocking and horrible. But, honey, this fellow you're mixed up with, he's taking advantage of you.'

'It's not that kind of relationship,' said Sylvia, getting up and locating a pair of stockings in the furor of her bureau drawers. 'It hasn't got anything to do with love. Forget about it. In fact, go home and forget about me altogether.'

Estelle looked at her narrowly. 'You scare me, Sylvia; you really scare me.' Sylvia laughed and went on getting dressed.



'Do you remember a long time ago when I said you ought to get married?'

'Uh-huh. And now you listen.' Sylvia turned around; there was a row of hairpins spaced across her mouth; she extracted them one at a time all the while she talked. 'You talk about getting married as though it were the answer absolute; very well, up to a point I agree. Sure I want to be loved, who the hell doesn't? But even if I was willing to compromise, where is the man I'm going to marry? Believe me, he must've fallen down a manhole. I mean it seriously when I say there are no men in New York . . . and even if there were, how do you meet them? Every man I ever met here who seemed the slightest bit attractive was either married, too poor to get married, or queer. And anyway, this is no place to fall in love; this is where you ought to come when you want to get over being in love. Sure, I suppose I could marry *somebody*; but do I want that? Do I?'

Estelle shrugged. 'Then what do you want?'

'More than is coming to me.' She poked the last hairpin into place, and smoothed her eyebrows before the mirror. 'I have an appointment, Estelle, and it is time for you to go now.'

'I can't leave you like this,' said Estelle, her hand waving helplessly around the room. 'Sylvia, you were my childhood friend.'

'That is just the point: we're not children any more; at least I'm not. No, I want you to go home, and I don't want you to come here again. I just want you to forget about me.'

Estelle fluttered at her eyes with a handkerchief, and by the time she reached the door she was weeping quite loudly. Sylvia could not afford remorse; having been mean, there was nothing to be but meaner. 'Go on,' she said, following Estelle into the hall, 'and write home any damn nonsense about me you want to!' Letting out a wail that brought other roomers to their doors, Estelle fled down the stairs.

After this, Sylvia went back into her room and sucked a piece of sugar to take the sour taste out of her mouth; it was her grandmother's remedy for bad tempers. Then she got down on her knees and pulled from under the bed a cigar box she kept hidden there. When you opened the box it played a home-made and somewhat disorganized version of 'Oh, How I Hate To Get Up In The Morning'. Her brother had made the music-box and given it to her on her fourteenth birthday. Eating the sugar she'd



thought of her grandmother, and hearing the tune she thought of her brother; the rooms of the house where they had lived rotated before her, all dark and she, like a light, moving among them; up the stairs, down, out and through, spring sweet and lilac shadows in the air and the creaking of a porch-swing: all gone, she thought, calling their names, and now I am absolutely alone. The music stopped. But it went on in her head; she could hear it bugling above the child-cries of the vacant lot. And it interfered with her reading. She was reading a little diary-like book she kept inside the box. In this book she wrote down the essentials of her dreams; they were endless now, and it was so hard to remember. Today she would tell Mr. Revercomb about the three blind children; he would like that: the prices he paid varied, and she was sure this was at least a ten-dollar dream. The cigar-box anthem followed her down the stairs and through the streets and she longed for it to go away.

In the store where the Santa Claus had been, there was a new and equally unnerving exhibit. Even when she was late to Mr. Revercomb's, as now, Sylvia was compelled to pause by the window. A plaster girl with intense glass eyes sat astride a bicycle pedalling at the maddest pace; though its wheel-spokes spun hypnotically, the bicycle, of course, never budged: all that effort and the poor girl going nowhere. It was a pitifully human situation, and one that Sylvia could so exactly identify with herself that she always felt a real pang. The music-box rewound in her head; the tune, her brother, the house, a high-school dance, the house, the tune! Couldn't Mr. Revercomb hear it? His penetrating gaze carried such dull suspicion. But he seemed pleased with her dream, and when she left, Miss Mozart gave her an envelope containing ten dollars.

'I had a ten-dollar dream,' she told Oreilly, and Oreilly, rubbing his hands together, said, 'Fine! Fine! But that's just my luck, baby . . . you should've got here sooner 'cause I went and did a terrible thing: I walked into a liquor store up the street, snatched a quart and ran.' Sylvia didn't believe him until he produced from his pinned-together overcoat a bottle of bourbon, already half gone. 'You're going to get in trouble some day,' she said, 'and then what would happen to me? I don't know what I would do without you.' Oreilly laughed and poured a shot of the whisky into a water-glass. They were sitting in an all-night



cafeteria, a great glaring food-depot alive with blue mirrors and raw murals. Although to Sylvia it seemed a sordid place, they met there frequently for dinner; but even if she could have afforded it she did not know where else they could go, for together they presented a curious aspect: a young girl and a doddering drunken man. Even here, people often stared at them; if they stared long enough, Oreilly would stiffen with dignity and say: 'Hello, hot lips, I remember you from way back: still working in the men's room?' But usually they were left to themselves, and sometimes they would sit talking until two and three in the morning.

'It's a good thing the rest of Master Misery's crowd don't know he gave you that ten bucks. One of them would say you stole the dream; I had that happen once. Eaten up, all of 'em, never saw such a bunch of sharks, worse than actors or clowns or business men. Crazy, if you think about it: you worry whether you're going to go to sleep, if you're going to have a dream, if you're going to remember the dream. Round and round. So you get a couple of bucks, so you rush to the nearest liquor store—or the nearest sleeping-pill machine. And first thing you know, you're roaming your way up outhouse alley. Why, baby, you know what it's like? It's just like life.'

'No, Oreilly, that's what it isn't like. It hasn't anything to do with life. It has more to do with being dead. I feel as though everything were being taken from me, as though some thief were stealing me down to the bone: Oreilly, I tell you I haven't an ambition, and there used to be so much. I don't understand it and I don't know what to do.'

He grinned. 'And you say it isn't like life? Who understands life and who knows what to do?'

'Be serious,' she said, 'be serious and put away that whisky and eat your soup before it gets stone cold.' She lighted a cigarette, and the smoke, smarting her eyes, intensified her frown. 'If only I knew what he wanted with those dreams, all typed and filed. What does he do with them? You're right when you say he is Master Misery—he can't be simply some silly quack, it can't be so meaningless as that. But why does he want dreams? Help me, Oreilly, think, think: what does it mean?'

Squinting one eye, Oreilly poured himself another drink; the clown-like twist of his mouth hardened into a line of scholarly



straightness. 'That is a million-dollar question, kid. Why don't you ask something easy, like how to cure the common cold? Yes, kid, what does it mean? I have thought about it a good deal. I have thought about it in the process of making love to a woman, and I have thought about it in the middle of a poker game.' He tossed the drink down his throat and shuddered. 'Now a sound can start a dream; the noise of one car passing in the night can drop a hundred sleepers into the deep parts of themselves; it's funny to think of that one car racing through the dark trailing so many dreams. Sex, a sudden change of light, a pickle, these are little keys that can open up our insides, too. But most dreams begin because there are furies inside of us that blow open all the doors. I don't believe in Jesus Christ, but I do believe in people's souls; and I figure it this way, baby: dreams are the mind of the soul and the secret truth about us. Now Master Misery, maybe he hasn't got a soul, so bit by bit he borrows yours, steals it like he would steal your dolls or the chicken-wing off your plate. Hundreds of souls have passed through him and gone into a filing case.'

'Oreilly, be serious,' she said again, annoyed because she thought he was making more jokes. 'And look, your soup is . . . ' She stopped abruptly, startled by Oreilly's peculiar expression. He was looking toward the entrance. Three men were there, two policemen and a civilian wearing a clerk's cloth jacket. The clerk was pointing towards their table. Oreilly's eyes circled the room with trapped despair; he sighed then, and leaned back in his seat, ostentatiously pouring himself another drink. 'Good evening, gentlemen,' he said, when the official party confronted him, 'will you join us for a drink?'

'You can't arrest him,' cried Sylvia, 'you can't arrest a clown!' She threw her ten-dollar bill at them, but the policemen did not pay any attention, and she began to pound the table. All the customers in the place were staring, and the manager came running up, wringing his hands. The police said for Oreilly to get to his feet. 'Certainly,' Oreilly said, 'though I do think it shocking you have to trouble yourselves with such petty crimes as mine when everywhere there are master thieves afoot. For instance, this pretty child,' he stepped between the officers and pointed to Sylvia, 'she is the recent victim of a major theft. Poor baby, she has had her soul stolen.'



For two days following Oreilly's arrest, Sylvia did not leave her room: sun on the window, then dark. By the third day she had run out of cigarettes, so she ventured as far as the corner delicatessen. She bought a package of cupcakes, a can of sardines, a newspaper, and cigarettes. In all this time she'd not eaten and it was a light, delicious, sharpening sensation; but the climb back up the stairs, the relief of closing the door, these so exhausted her she could not quite make the daybed. She slid down to the floor and did not move until it was day again; she thought afterwards that she'd been there about twenty minutes. Turning on the radio as loud as it would go, she dragged a chair up to the window and opened the newspaper on her lap: *Lana Denies, Russia Rejects, Miners Conciliate*. Of all things this was saddest, that life goes on; if one leaves one's lover, life should stop for him, and if one disappears from the world, then the world should stop, too; and it never did. And that was the real reason for most people getting up in the morning, not because it would matter but because it wouldn't. But if Mr. Revercomb succeeded finally in collecting all the dreams out of every head perhaps...the idea slipped, became entangled with radio and newspaper. *Falling Temperatures*. A snow-storm moving across Colorado, across the west, falling upon all the small towns, yellowing every light, filling every football, falling now and here, but how quickly it had come, the snow-storm. The roofs, the vacant lot, the distance deep in white and deepening, like sleep. She looked at the paper and she looked at the snow. But it must have been snowing all day. It could not have just started. There was no sound of traffic; in the swirling wastes of the vacant lot, children circled a bonfire; a car, buried at the curb, winked its headlights. Help! help! silent, like the heart's distress. She crumbled a cupcake and sprinkled it on the window-sill; north-birds would come to keep her company. And she left the window open for them; snow-wind scattered flakes that dissolved on the floor like April-fool jewels. *Presents Life Can Be Beautiful*: turn down that radio! The witch of the woods was tapping at her door. 'Yes, Mrs. Halloran,' she said, and turned off the radio altogether. Snow-quiet, sleep-silent, only the fun-fire far-away song-singing of children; and the room was blue with cold colder than the cold of fairy-tales: 'Lie down, my heart, among the igloo flowers of snow: Mr. Revercomb, why do you wait upon the threshold? Ah, do come inside, it is so cold out there.'



But her moment of waking was warm and held. The window was closed, and a man's arms were around her. He was singing to her, his voice gentle but jaunty: '*Cherryberry, moneyberry, happy-berry pie, but the best old pie is a loveberry pie . . .*'

'Oreilly, is it . . . is it really you?'

He squeezed her. 'Baby's awake now. And how does she feel?'

'I had thought I was dead,' she said, and happiness winged around inside her like a bird lamed but still flying. She tried to hug him and she was too weak. 'I love you, Oreilly; you are my only friend and I was so frightened: I thought I would never see you again.' She paused, remembering. 'But why aren't you in jail?'

Oreilly's face got all tickled and pink. 'I was never in jail,' he said mysteriously. 'But first, let's have something to eat. I brought some things up from the delicatessen this morning.'

She had a sudden feeling of floating. 'How long have you been here?'

'Since yesterday,' he said, fussing around with bundles and paper plates. 'You let me in yourself.'

'That's impossible. I don't remember it at all.'

'I know,' he said, leaving it at that. 'Here, drink your milk like a good kid and I'll tell you a real wicked story. Oh, it's wild,' he promised, slapping his sides gladly and looking more than ever like a clown. 'Well, like I said, I never was in jail and this bit of fortune came to me because there I was being hustled down the street by those bindlestiffs when who should I see come swinging along but the gorilla woman: you guessed it, Miss Mozart. "Hi," I says to her, "off to the barber shop for a shave?" "It's about time you were put under arrest," she says, and smiles at one of the cops: "Do your duty, officer". "Oh," I says to her, "I'm not under arrest: me, I'm just on my way to the station-house to give them the low-down on you, you dirty communist." You can imagine what sort of holler she set up then; she grabbed hold of me and the cops grabbed hold of her—can't say I didn't warn them. "Careful, boys," I said, "she's got hair on her chest." And she sure did lay about her. So I just sort of walked off down the street. Never have believed in standing around watching fist-fights the way people do in this city.'

Oreilly stayed with her in the room over the week-end. It was



like the most beautiful party Sylvia could remember; she'd never laughed so much, for one thing, and no one, certainly no one in her family, had ever made her feel so loved. Oreilly was a fine cook, and he fixed delicious dishes on the little electric stove; once he scooped snow off the window-sill and made sherbert flavoured with strawberry syrup: by Sunday she was strong enough to dance. They turned on the radio and she danced until she fell to her knees windless and laughing. 'I'll never be afraid again,' she said. 'I hardly know what I was afraid of to begin with.'

'The same things you'll be afraid of the next time,' Oreilly told her quietly. 'That is a quality of Master Misery: no one ever knows what he is... not even children, and they know mostly everything.'

Sylvia went to the window; an arctic whiteness lay over the city, but the snow had stopped, and the night sky was as clear as ice; there, riding above the river, she saw the first star of evening. 'I see the first star,' she said, crossing her fingers.

'And what do you wish when you see the first star?'

'I wish to see another star,' she said. 'At least that is what I usually wish.'

'But tonight?'

She sat down on the floor and leaned her head against his knee. 'Tonight I wished that I could have back my dreams.'

'Don't we all?' Oreilly said, stroking her hair. 'But then what would you do? I mean what would you do if you could have them back?'

Sylvia was silent a moment; when she spoke her eyes were gravely distant. 'I would go home,' she said slowly. 'And that is a terrible decision, for it would mean giving up most of my other dreams. But if Mr. Revercomb would let me have them back, then I would go home tomorrow.'

Saying nothing, Oreilly went to the closet and brought back her coat. 'But why?' she asked as he helped her on with it. 'Never mind,' he said, 'just do what I tell you. We're going to pay Mr. Revercomb a call, and you're going to ask him to give you back your dreams. It's a chance.'

Sylvia baulked at the door. 'Please, Oreilly, don't make me go; I can't, please, I'm afraid.'

'I thought you said you'd never be afraid again.'



But once in the street, he hurried her so quickly against the wind she did not have time to be frightened. It was Sunday, stores were closed and the traffic lights seemed to wink only for them, for there were no moving cars along the snow-deep avenue. Sylvia even forgot where they were going, and chattered of trivial oddments: right here at this corner is where she'd seen Garbo, and over there, that is where the old woman was run over. Presently, however, she stopped, out of breath and overwhelmed with sudden realization. 'I can't, Oreilly,' she said, pulling back. 'What can I say to him?'

'Make it like a business deal,' said Oreilly. 'Tell him straight out that you want your dreams, and if he'll give them to you you'll pay back all the money—on the instalment plan, naturally. It's simple enough, kid: why the hell couldn't he give them back? They are all right there in a filing case.'

This speech was somehow convincing and, stamping her frozen feet, Sylvia went ahead with a certain courage. 'That's the kid,' he said. They separated on Third Avenue, Oreilly being of the opinion that Mr. Revercomb's immediate neighbourhood was not for the moment precisely safe. He confined himself in a doorway, now and then lighting a match and singing aloud: *but the best old pie is a whiskyberry pie!* Like a wolf a long thin dog came padding over the moon-slats under the elevated, and across the street there were the misty shapes of men ganged around a bar: the idea of maybe cadging a drink in there made him groggy.

Just as he had decided on perhaps trying something of the sort, Sylvia appeared. And she was in his arms before he knew that it was really her. 'It can't be so bad, sweetheart,' he said softly, holding her as best he could. 'Don't cry, baby; it's too cold to cry; you'll chap your face.' As she strangled for words her crying evolved into a tremulous, unnatural laugh: the air was filled with the smoke of her laughter. 'Do you know what he said,' she gasped, 'do you know what he said when I asked for my dreams?' Her head fell back, and her laughter rose and carried over the street like an abandoned, wildly coloured kite. Oreilly had finally to shake her by the shoulders. 'He said... I couldn't have them back because... because he'd used them all up.'

She was silent then, her face smoothing into an expressionless calm. She put her arm through Oreilly's, and together they moved down the street; but it was as if they were friends pacing



a platform, each waiting for the other's train, and when they reached the corner he cleared his throat and said: 'I guess I'd better turn off here. It's as likely a spot as any.'

Sylvia held on to his sleeve. 'But where will you go, Oreilly?' 'Travelling in the blue,' he said, trying a smile that didn't work out very well.

She opened her purse. 'A man cannot travel in the blue without a bottle,' she said and, kissing him on the cheek, slipped five dollars into his pocket.

'Bless you, baby.'

It did not matter that it was the last of her money, that now she would have to walk home, and alone. The pilings of snow were like the white waves of a white sea, and she rode upon them, carried by winds and tides of the moon: 'I do not know what I want, and perhaps I shall never know, but my only wish from every star will always be another star; and truly I am not afraid,' she thought. Two boys came out of a bar and stared at her; in some park some long time ago she'd seen two boys and they might be the same. Truly I am not afraid, she thought, hearing their snowy footsteps following after her; and anyway, there was nothing left to steal.



# J. P. HODIN

## EXPRESSIONISM

'The first phase of medieval art has a haunting charm beyond compare: its own intrinsic quality is enhanced by the fact that its message, which stretched beyond art's own self-justification of aesthetic achievement, was the symbolism of things lying behind nature itself. In this symbolic phase, medieval art energized in nature as its medium, but pointed to another world.'

A. N. Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World*.

### STYLE AND PERIODICITY



ERNST JOSEPHSON

THE newer aesthetics is not exclusively concerned with problems of form, but devotes great attention to the creative processes themselves and the relationship between style and personality. In this one can recognize the influence of modern psychology. (For the older generation style was more the expression of a whole cultural epoch's consciousness.) The question of style is of the greatest importance in any serious conception of art, and aesthetes in Central Europe have been intensely preoccupied with it during the last few decades. There a comparative science of styles sprang up, and also the beginnings of a morphology of style (Spengler); and the inter-relations between aesthetics and other

branches of learning were developed. All that is more or less absent from England; there has, however, been a recrudescence of interest during the last few years in America. A theory of the plastic arts is as necessary as a theory of music. It is impossible to arrive at any really valid results in aesthetic literature without agreement as to the use of terms and their exact definition. This is particularly true today, for the time has come when it is no longer possible to accept everything that claims to be new in art.



In his analysis of problems of style, *Kunstgeschichtliche Grundbegriffe* the Swiss aesthete H. Wölfflin claims to have discovered two different tendencies in the evolution of European art, corresponding to two different modes of vision and recurring periodically in the course of time. According to Wölfflin these two stylistic tendencies became most clearly manifest in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, in the classic and the baroque spirit. (In this essay the somewhat wider term 'romantic' will be substituted for 'baroque', as being better suited to our purpose.) Wölfflin goes on to point out that the art of the sixteenth century was clear and that of the seventeenth century confused. It is interesting to note that scientists refer to the seventeenth century as the century of genius, in which the names of Francis Bacon, Harvey, Kepler, Galileo, Descartes, Pascal, Huyghens, Boyle, Newton, Locke, Spinoza and Leibniz appeared like stars of the first magnitude in the sky of exact science. Other authorities have postulated a third type of formative will beside the classic and the romantic, namely the primitive, this being regarded not only as an early stage of development in relation to, e.g., the classic, but as a mode of expression in its own right. We shall later draw attention to the phenomenon that all three styles can appear simultaneously. Indeed, there is an artist who has in his work exploited all the wealth of styles from all periods and nations.

When we investigate the elements characterizing the different styles, we can make the following statements about the classic. The *grouping* in the picture is symmetrical and counterbalanced; the *structure* is composite (the individual components remain distinct, e.g. architecture, landscape, figures); *colour* is based on the contrast of light and shadow; the various components overlap each other to some extent in their *spatial distribution*; *extension* is three-dimensional (geometrical perspective); the *line* tends to be intersected; the *rhythm* is determined by an angular system. As regards *movement*, classic art is static, balanced and harmonious; the *formative will* is constructive, the *state of mind* is a conscious one.

The romantic style shows asymmetry and torsion (rhythmic sinuosities) in the *grouping*; in *structure* the interpenetration of the various pictorial elements; in *colour* it is opalescent, iridescent; in *spatial distribution* the various components cross each other; *extension* is four-dimensional (three dimensions in space with one psychological or religious dimension extending into the infinite,



the eternal); the *line* is violent and varied; the *rhythm* is conditioned by the intersections and interweavings. As regards *movement*, the romantic style is dynamic, unbalanced, ecstatic, disharmonious; the *formative will* is complicated (in our period destructive—distortions); the artist's *state of mind* is influenced by the subconscious (in our period particularly by negative feelings such as fear and despair). If the seventeenth-century baroque had faith, the romantic movement in present-day art is agnostic and solipsistic as a protest against the time itself, and neurotic as well. It is like a cry of despair, a revolt that often oversteps the borderline between the normal and the abnormal.

The primitive style has symmetry in the *grouping*; the *structure* is simple; the *colour* is even and strong; the *distribution in space* parallel or radiating; the *extension* two-dimensional, the *line* continuous, the *rhythm* established by repetition, symmetry and parallelism. The element of *movement* is supplied by the narrative content. Among primitive peoples the *formative will* is governed by the magic and the hypnotic; in folk-art and in neo-primitivism it is conditioned by a naïve representational and play impulse.

This generalizing classification provides us with a measuring rod with which to approach the varied artistic output of the present.

*Expressionism*, with which we are chiefly concerned in this essay, has affinities with romanticism and primitivism, but none with classicism. It is hostile to classicism of any sort. South of the Alps and west of the Rhine, it cannot be found, or only if introduced by foreign artists, such as Chagall, who transplanted a Jewish mystical element from Russia to Paris, or Van Gogh, who came from Holland. Rouault is the only French exception who may, in a certain sense, be regarded as an expressionist, although, indeed, his style is characterized by the primitive formal elements of the archaic Christian art of the catacombs and Gothic stained glass. In general it may be said that modern expressionism represents the disintegrating tendency of the tradition-bound formal values of European art, which trace their origin back to Greek culture. This culture spread via Sicily into Italy, from Imperial Rome into the Renaissance and later springing to new life again in France. The French feeling for proportion (*la mesure*), repose (*le calme*), *la belle matière* and good taste (*le goût*), as the infallible compass for their artistic production, shows them to be the heirs of the Renaissance. It would be wrong to say, as is so often said, that the classic is the



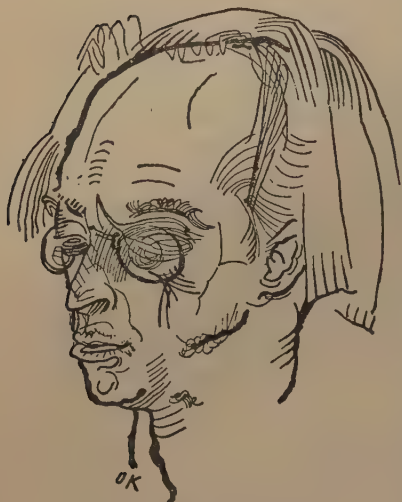
mode of expression proper to the Latin race, since indeed the Greeks were not Latins and the Baroque was of Italian origin. If it is impossible to call the Latin race the sole exponent of the classic style, then this style must be connected with geographical situation. Perhaps the sun is one of the secrets of the classic. That is not to claim that the sun is the sole cause of it, but rather that under its kindly rays beauty evolves freely, man finds his way to Greek harmony and to the nobility of inner balance, that balance which is hardly known north of the Alps, where the lack of sunshine manifests itself in a nostalgic longing, in the Gothic, the Baroque, expressionism and surrealism. While the religion of the north was reorganizing itself in rational sectarianism, Italy produced Francis of Assisi, that gentle reviver of the faith, whose love extended beyond human beings to animals, plants, the earth and the wind, and who created the hymn to the sun, *Il Cantico di Frate Sole*:

Laudato si, mi Signore,  
cum tucte le Tue creature,  
spetialmente messo lo frate sole,  
lo quale jorna et allumini  
noi per loi, et ellu è bellu  
e radiante cum grande splendore:  
de Te, altissimo, porta significatione.

Goethe, perhaps the only European north of the Alps who was classic in his way of feeling, at the age of eighty said, in answer to Eckermann's question whether he felt reverence for Christ: 'I bow before him as the divine revelation of the highest moral principle. And, indeed, if I am asked whether it is in my nature to revere the sun, I would also say: Certainly! For it, too, is a revelation of the highest, and, indeed, the mightiest one that it is granted to us mortals to perceive. In it I worship the light and creative power of God, by which alone we live and have our being, and all plants and animals with us.' Only in our days does something of the morbid and sceptical spirit of the misty north infiltrate into the south—this time, however, not on the wings of the imagination, but to the brazen rhythm of industrialism. And in industrialism's present anti-cultural stage of development, men waste away from lack of any joy in living, as though touched by the fatal breath of a plague.



## THE PSYCHOLOGICAL BACKGROUND OF EXPRESSIONISM



OSKAR KOKOSCHKA

When we compare the methods of modern science with those of modern art, we are surprised by a peculiar phenomenon. In whatever country a piece of scientific work is carried out, and to whatever nationality the scientist may belong, the methods that he uses are based on internationally recognized and applied principles, and the results bring about changes affecting the whole of mankind. In the plastic arts man's creative urge, the will to expression, has experimented in various directions, and at one and the same time methods of representation have been used that differ from each other in the principles on

which they are based. Modern art does not give an unambiguous picture of man's emotional and intellectual life at the present day.

The comparison between science and art would not be justified if a tendency to use the scientific approach in creative art had not become apparent. Cubism was a rational movement. There is rationalism, too, in programmatic surrealism and in conscious primitivism. In the first case, it was the shadow of psycho-analysis falling on art; in the second, the shadow of art history. When forms borrowed from Negro sculpture appeared in Picasso's work, it was a rational rather than an irrational process. 'Styles' were rapidly adopted and dropped again just as fast. It was, to vary Picasso's well-known aphorism, more a matter of seeking than of finding.

The uniformity of scientific development all over the world is symptomatic of the fact that science concerns itself only with a part of phenomenal experience, and that, furthermore, only from a particular point of view. The application of scientific methods to other realms of experience necessarily results in an impoverishment of intellectual activity. The analytical spirit and the creative functions of the mind are forces which are diametrically opposed.



When the crisis in modern art is referred to, what is meant is the crisis which occurred in the extreme movements of the Ecole de Paris. It is obvious that the creative energy of Paris is spent. From another point of view there is yet another crisis in art. If we study the art of earlier periods, we are forced to the conclusion that there has been a gradual decay of creative force. In mechanistic civilization the human brain undergoes a profound change. We may go so far as to say that we are witnesses of how the mind is adjusting itself to man's organized and rational world and losing its contact with the primeval forces of creation. This conclusion is not new. Ludwig Klages, in his *Grundlage der Wissenschaft vom Ausdruck* (Rudiments of the Science of Expression), speaks of 'the disturbance in the soul's power of self-expression' being due to 'a violation of the instincts by the will'. As the intellect becomes more and more highly organized, so people grow out of the state of instinctive harmony with nature, until, with the appearance of modern civilization, they lose it completely. Evidence of this is seen in children's urge to express themselves; in early childhood they have a capacity for total experience, which later, through the contact with the world of the grown-ups, they lose (Cizek). The artistic impulse of the mentally deranged is also part of the same thing, in so far as it is an expression of the creative will's having found new liberty in the disease disorder (Prinzhorn).

When we come to consider the modern schools from the point of view of style, we find that they fall into two main groups. In one, there is a conscious setting up of formal laws, whose function in our time is 'scientific'. Such are the Impressionists' theory of light and colour, Seurat's pointillism, the geometric theses of cubism, the constructions of abstract art and of architectural surrealism (Chirico), and, in its over-logical campaign against logic, spatial and physical causality, the surrealism of Dali and Miró. The liberation of human imagination from nature, which at first appeared to be a great revolutionary achievement (Ortega y Gasset has hailed it as a triumph, Abbé Brémont has called it the pure act of creation, and Malraux provided it with a psychological background, when he made the statement, that the origin of a work of art is not to be found in any experience of nature, but in the experience of a picture or a poem), led to a dehumanizing of art. Modern art psychology has defined the problem as being one of abstraction and empathy (Einfühlung). Where the creative will



produces anorganic, abstract forms, we cannot be dealing with a creative will that arises out of the need to experience by empathy; it is, on the contrary, a need which is directly opposed to empathy, namely a tendency to suppress life. We can go so far as to say that abstraction is nothing less than an escape from life, just as Freud spoke of an escape into neurosis. 'These abstract, logical forms are the highest ones, the only ones in which man can find relief from the overwhelming chaos of the world as he experiences it' (Wilhelm Worringer). 'Abstraction appears as a function which is in opposition to primitive "participation mystique"' (Lévy-Brühl). It is a separation from the object in order to break the attachment to it. Empathy as a principle of artistic creation is based on the magic significance of the subject, which takes possession of the object by a process of mystic identification (C. G. Jung). Empathy is the method of expressionism.

Expressionist and rational art in the widest use of these terms are therefore the two currents in which the modern formative will manifests itself.<sup>1</sup> Since art is a language, we may assume that its utterances are those of two human types. Personalities have always been divided into romantic and classic, or dynamic and harmonious temperaments. Kretzschmer made other distinctions, Nietzsche spoke of dionysian and faustian, and Jung of introvert and extravert types.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The neo-primitivism of *le douanier* Rousseau or of Bauchant is based on the study of the Louvre. It contains a classic formal element and is an exception proving our rule. There is a naïvist movement in modern Swedish painting, traditionally linked with the old folk-art. Its best representative, Sven Erixson, is a primitive expressionist. Vivin's work is more craft than art. Campigli stands for a revival of old Roman and Pompeian painting. Klee was a highly nervous intellectual artist whose primitivism gave him the relaxation he needed from the pressure of mechanical civilization. But the modern artist's problem is not merely one of regaining a primitive outlook. As an adult one may yearn to be a child again, but that does not make one a child.

<sup>2</sup> This, however, does not explain the peculiar fact that one and the same culture simultaneously produces two different styles. A combination of this kind may arise in an age when one style is being merged into another, as in the time of transition from the Norman to the Gothic style or during the early Renaissance (Byzantine style) or the late Renaissance (Baroque). In our time there is no question of a transition period in this sense. Two essentially different styles, different in technique, in tradition, and in the artist's approach to his object and his psychological incentives, characterize modern art. Such a phenomenon has hitherto not been known in the history of art. It is the expression of our rootlessness. Whether the dualism between the rational and the irrational in art can be bridged, is an open question.





ERNST JOSEPHSON. Portrait of Ludwig Josephson producing Shakespeare's  
'Midsunmer Night's Dream'. 1893





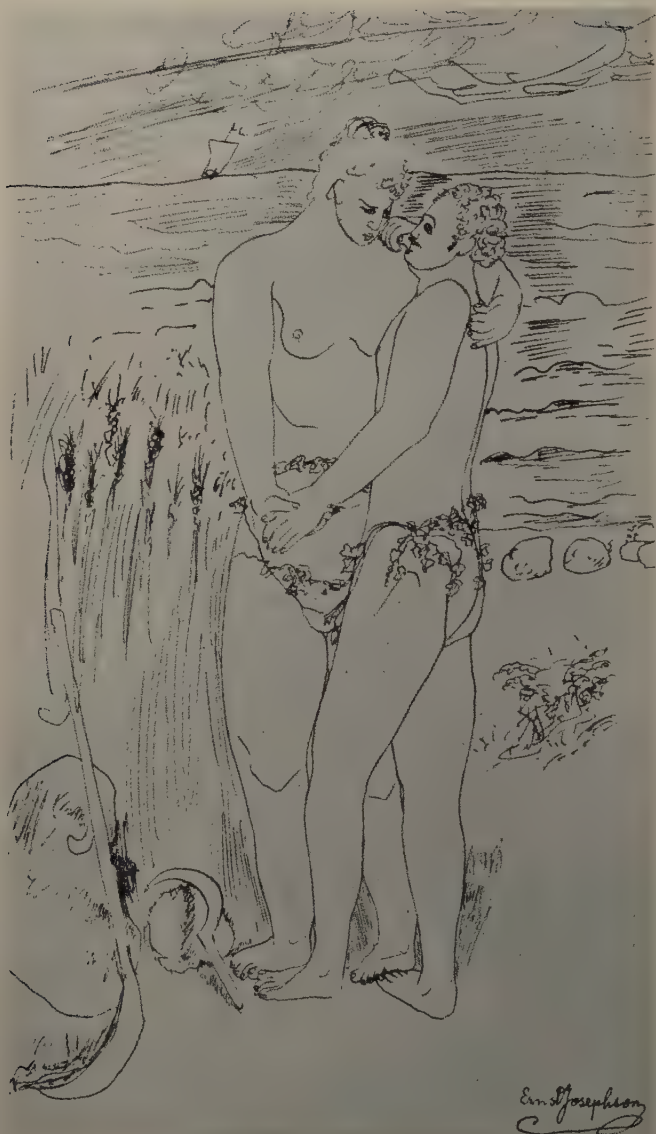
EDVARD MUNCH. The Death of the Bohemian. 1925-6





EDVARD MUNCH. Desire. 1898. Lithograph





ERNST JOSEPHSON. The Lovers





OSKAR KOKOSCHKA. View of the Thames. 1925-6

*Allbright Art Gallery, Buffalo*





OSKAR KOKOSCHKA. Self-portrait (detail). 1937



Behind expressionist art stand men who regard it as a sin against the spirit to produce anything by coldly rational means. Both Edvard Munch and Oskar Kokoschka have made statements to this effect. The expressionist is an archetype in Jung's sense; that is, he possesses a collective unconscious whose content and functions are of an archaic nature. *'It is not the matter of imitating the archaic, but of qualities which are in the nature of a relic. All those psychological traits which in essentials correspond to the qualities of the primitive mentality are of such a nature.'* The artist's images are archaic when they have unrecognizable mythological parallels. Hence the expressionist artist is associated with the myth-building force, that truly creative, primordial spiritual force out of which the symbols were created that gave form to men's conception of life and the world. Will a regeneration of present-day art come from this force? Or are we leaning towards a new classic art?

In expressionism we are less concerned with a school than with personality. The relationship between personality and style is obvious, when it is a question of those processes which have their source in the unconscious. The relationship between style and epoch was developed in the work of the Viennese professor Max Dvorak, who saw the history of art as the history of the human spirit and stated emphatically that the history of art must not remain under the spell of the materialistic outlook of natural science.

Expressionism is a style which appears in times of great spiritual tension. The Viennese art historian Alois Riegl showed that one of its characteristics is a profound religious emotion. Michelangelo's 'Pietà' in the Palazzo Rondanini, or the 'Descent from the Cross' in Florence Cathedral, both belong to this type of expression, as do works of El Greco, of Hieronymus Bosch, of Pieter Brueghel, of the old Rembrandt, of the late Goya, of Mathias Grünewald, the great master of the Isenheim altar in Colmar,<sup>1</sup> or those of the Baroque. It is a sombre, passionate art, the art of Van Gogh, Lovis Corinth, Edvard Munch, Ernst

<sup>1</sup> It must be considered as a significant symptom that Picasso's *Guernica* bears definite traces of the influences of Mathias Grünewald. In 1936 Christian Zervos redirected French artists' attention to this German expressionist master, in his book *Le Retable d'Isenheim*. What Zervos admires in Grünewald's work is *'l'exacte conscience de la réalité et du rêve'*—here meaning the religious idea—*'leur fusion sans que le moindre dualisme puisse s'y observer, l'action prolongée sur la sensibilité, la concentration dans une image de l'émotion spirituelle, etc.'*



Josephson, the later Turner, James Ensor, Oskar Kokoschka, Rouault, Chagall, Jack B. Yeats, Soutine, in which spiritual experience asserts itself against the tyranny of mathematical thought, belief in causality and technical progress, in fact against the mechanization of civilization.

### THREE EXPRESSIONISTS



EDVARD MUNCH

The Norwegian Edvard Munch (1863–1944), that great and lonely figure in the north, is the founder of modern expressionism. In his youth Europe's intellectual atmosphere was drenched in the melancholy ideas of symbolism. The pillars of society (morality, religion and social order) were shaken; there were no new values to replace the old. So the artist of those days drowned his sorrow in melancholy, just as today he drowns it in pessimism and nihilism. Painting in Norway was at that time inclined towards a sentimental social realism; in Germany it was the academic romanticism of the Düsseldorf school that prevailed, together with the literary style of *art nouveau*; in France impressionism had become established. Munch very quickly freed himself from all these styles. He had something to say that could not be expressed in any of these formal languages, though it must be mentioned that his own style benefited by the

new approach to problems of painting which had been made in France. One of Munch's earliest masterpieces is a picture of a girl



ying. The first version, 'Spring, 1889', is realistic and literary. In the second, 'The Sick Girl, 1906', he tried to express the psychological drama directly through intensification and symbolization of the colour. The colours have become 'expressionistic', all details have vanished, and the attention is concentrated on the human element. Munch made his material rebellious, in order to make it serve his purpose. His greatness lies in the fact that he restored the human idea to the centre of painting. The unity of the human idea and form that distinguished other periods of art and constituted their greatness was abandoned in the heroic quest for new means of expression. 'The idea as a central creative element in the work of art became lost in the new development since David, Daumier and Delacroix, became attenuated in the work of Manet and still more so in that of Monet, until, in neo-impressionism, it finally disappeared altogether. Today we do not, and dare not, fear to specify as the ultimate aim—that the idea shall be the nucleus and final meaning of all plastic art.' (Emil Filla.)<sup>1</sup> André Gide has made the same demand in his *A Few Reflections on the Disappearance of the Subject in Sculpture and Painting*, and in 1946, in his preface to a book on Poussin, he denounced non-representational art. 'This voluntary impoverishment, this self-imposed deficiency, will, I think, seem the future characteristic of our levelling age and make it incur the risk of being severely judged hereafter; yes, all the more severely, the more admirable the technical qualities of these painters may have been. It is by their *insignificance* that the paintings of our age will be recognized.'

As early as 1889, at St. Cloud, Munch wrote in his diary: 'No more painting of interiors with men reading and women knitting! They must be living people who breathe; feel, suffer and love. I will paint a series of such pictures, in which people will have to recognize the holy element and bare their heads before it, as though in church.' This series is the 'Frieze of Life', Munch's great expressionist contribution to modern art. It is conceived as an epic of modern man, a poem on life, love and death. In 1892 Munch exhibited fifty-five pictures from this series in Berlin. The writer Stanislaw Przybyszewski at that time defined Munch's work in the following terms: 'The old kind of art and psychology were

<sup>1</sup> All quotations in this paragraph are taken from J. P. Hodin, *Edvard Munch. Der Genius des Nordens*. Neuer Verlag, Stockholm, 1948.



an art and a psychology of the conscious personality, whereas the new art is the art of the individual. Men dream and their dreams open up vistas of a new world to them; it is as though they perceived things with their mind's ears and eyes, without having heard or seen them physically. What the personality is unable to perceive is revealed to them by the individuality—something that lives a life of its own, apart from the life of which they are conscious.' Munch meant tremendously much to young artists at the turn of the century. 'Munch pointed the way ahead for us; at the very beginning, while we were plucking up our courage to express our own ideas, we had the good fortune to meet Edvard Munch himself. He became the symbol of our inevitable destiny. It was like Donatello's coming to Padua or Caravaggio's influence in Rome.' Twenty years later the same artist wrote: 'Munch's work exhibited in the Great Hall of the International Exhibition in Dresden in 1926 compares favourably with the entire present-day production not merely of Germany but also of France. Matisse and Van Gogh, Gauguin and Bonnard, Derain and all Germany's impressionists and expressionists without exception seemed to have good, solid technique, but, original though their work was, it was one-sided. Their art might be compared to chamber-music, while Munch's needed a full orchestra.'

Munch was an expressionist only for the first half of his life. After a nervous breakdown in 1907, in which he barely escaped the fate that destroyed Van Gogh, he changed both his style and his mode of life. His large murals in the University of Oslo are no longer expressionist. Besides, painting on a monumental scale calls for a different style. Munch's numerous portraits are not expressionist either, but attempt to rival Velazquez with modern means; and the style of his later landscapes is one of classic balance. Munch was a very good draughtsman, and this saved him from the formlessness of many modern expressionists; his human interests kept him from overstressing the formal side of art and so degenerating into formalism; and his genius as a painter saved him from the danger of becoming literary, the weakness of the Pre-Raphaelites.

If we compare Munch's expressionist pictures with the early portraits (1907-14) of the Austrian Oskar Kokoschka (b. 1886), we realize how much more hopeless and disharmonious the world had become for this generation. Kokoschka's expressionism does



not take the form of representing psychological situations, but penetrates far below the surface in an attempt to interpret the psychological states in relation to their mysterious moorings deep in the human psyche. It is the 'inner face' of man that fascinates Kokoschka, and this is what he lays bare with an almost suicidally destructive urge. What he saw was evil. 'I felt quite intensely and suddenly as if man were stricken with an incurable disease.'<sup>1</sup> These early studies in portraiture were painted at the time when Freud was announcing the first results of his psycho-analytical researches. Kokoschka had to invent new means of expression to enable him to reveal what he saw. In his early youth he derived considerable inspiration from the art of primitive peoples. Later on, like other artists, he was indebted to the great achievements of French pre-cubist art.

In my belief every expressionist is a disappointed idealist. Kokoschka suffered from the spiritual conflict of his time and was destined to give it form. This stress is apparent in the unrest of his brushwork, as well as in his manner of composition, where everything is in movement and aims at achieving a spiritual relationship. In 1945, in London, he wrote the fateful words: 'Modern portrait painting has become a difficult task, since the artist who tries to make people see the human being, invisible in present-day man, is apt to make a fool of himself. Since society is at present a mathematical and bureaucratically conceived mass-organization, we cannot hear the last bell toll, although the apocalyptic horsemen are already shaking heaven and earth. We do not mind the stench of the funeral pyre of our world. Since humanism died, man is soulless; he no longer cares whether he lives or dies. The march of industrial civilization will be marked with utter ruin and destruction, like the path of the hordes that once invaded Europe. There will be no portrait left of modern man because he has lost his face and is turning towards the jungle.'

Even in his first landscapes and compositions the expressionist consciousness is unmistakable. It reached its climax in the First World War, in which Kokoschka was gravely wounded, and in the period immediately afterwards, which he spent in Dresden. This was a severe spiritual crisis in the artist's life and was anything but normal. It is, as we can see, a situation analogous to Munch's.

<sup>1</sup> All quotations in this paragraph are taken from J. P. Hodin, *Oskar Kokoschka and his Time*. In preparation.



After this period came a fresh creative impulse. On his extensive travels the artist painted his great panoramic landscapes. They are perhaps the most important work that he has done. He regained his balance in the midst of nature and in the contemplation of sites of ancient civilizations. The expressionist became a Dionysic Greek, his art becoming dithyrambic and losing its discords.

German expressionism, which had manifested itself in the groups 'Die Brücke' and 'Der blaue Reiter', received its decisive inspiration from Munch, the French post-impressionists, and Kokoschka. With the exception of Lovis Corinth, this German expressionism is less a style than a chaotic movement, which remained amorphous and could not crystallize. The melancholy Austrian element in Kokoschka and his genius saved him from lapsing into the doctrinaire spirit of modern German painting.

In his late portraits, from about 1942 onwards, Kokoschka arrived at a synthesis of his early portrait style and that of his landscape painting. With his mature and masterly accomplishment he achieved results which, from the aesthetic point of view, overshadow his first portraits. For two years I watched him painting the face of a lady. It was young when he began, just as he saw her for the first time, and while he was adding layer after layer, skin upon skin, with a loose technique—which it would be tempting to call psychological impressionism—the face acquired experience, depth, age and plasticity—a unique pictorial plasticity. Kokoschka has never renounced space. He has restored its metaphysical significance. That is why he is opposed to the French two-dimensional style of painting. His perspective is not scientific; it is constructed neither in the Renaissance sense (Uccello) nor in the cubist sense, but evolves organically from an immanent function of the eye. The left and the right eye, he says, are not the same; just as the left hand has a different function from the right, so the eyes have their particular tasks in the creation of an image. As the field of vision also extends some distance behind the face, Kokoschka takes this into consideration. This principle is actually the secret of Chinese perspective. Kokoschka is a mystic. For him mysticism means a profound sense of the universal, an awareness of totality, and communion with creation. Modern art is for him little more than a formula, a constructive intention. He speaks of the realm of art being invaded by forces that are hostile to life.



'A world of ideas with a universal aspect is perishing. We are the witnesses of it. These ideas are the opposite of every analytic process.' The expressionist Kokoschka feels himself aesthetically and spiritually related to the world of the Baroque. The Baroque still had the feeling for the wholeness of life; Baroque man lived at peace with God and creation. For Kokoschka there is no longer any common denominator of a spiritual and human kind, in our time. What else can he do but cling to the roots that he bears within himself? 'The determining feature of life,' he says, 'its essence, is the consciousness of the image. I was always fascinated by inner processes. What I need is the image, the contact with the infinite. No one will ever quite be able to describe that visionary consciousness or set a limit to its history, because it is life itself. As long as I could retain an image, I lived by it. There is before me a figure which I have not seen for many years. It has the same fascination for me as before, indeed it is more vivid than the present moment. What is this fascination? Behind it there is a hidden force. When this force grips me, all is well. When it leaves me, I am empty. That is why I have not had a slow, sure success, but ups and downs, like the ebb and flow of a tide. As the image is dependent on me, so am I on it. I have to await the call—and then I must not fail.'

While Kokoschka's vision is still controlled by the conscious mind, the Swede Ernst Josephson (1851-1906) only achieved his expressionist mode of representation, and with it his artistic liberty, in a state of uncontrolled vision. Hampered in his artistic strivings by difficult conditions of life in the Biedermeier Sweden of his time, misunderstood, and his own personality frustrated by classical examples in art, he was struck down by mental illness in 1888—the same year in which Van Gogh fell ill. It is to this schizophrenic imagination that we are indebted for works which, if they had come into existence in one of the centres of European art, or had at least become known there at an early date, would have made the name of Ernst Josephson famous all over the world. In the year 1893, Josephson painted the first expressionistic portrait in modern painting. It is a picture with an utterly frightening intensity of expression, in its effect stronger than Chagall and in its conception anticipating the portraits painted fifteen years later by Kokoschka. Besides a few oil-paintings from Josephson's period of insanity there is a multitude of large water-colours, painted on



cardboard, and many hundreds of pen-drawings. The number of the latter is not known exactly but can be estimated at about two thousand. Amongst these are drawings of astonishing beauty and novelty of manner, which later found their way to foreign countries and which influenced one of the epochs of Picasso's many-sided art. This can be seen above all in pure line-drawings with voluminous arms and legs.

Modern psychiatry regards schizophrenia as a disease of the will. It is obvious that a mania for titanic grandeur destroyed this artist. In order to achieve results in art, it is less important to have great aims in mind, than to make good use of the talent one has been given. Is it not the tragedy of Blake that he had 'the will' to achieve things comparable to those of Shakespeare or Michelangelo, and that he tried to achieve them by academic means? When Josephson, before his breakdown on the Ile de Bréhat, in Brittany, with an already disrupted nervous system, took part in spiritualist séances and produced drawings which he signed with the signatures of Raphael, Michelangelo or Velazquez, and poems which had been 'dictated' to him by Shakespeare, Milton or Dante, we see how the unfortunate Swede was beginning to identify himself with the greatest spirits of mankind. Identification with God, Christ or some ideal personality is a usual symptom of schizophrenia. This fact throws light on the central problem of his disease. His inferiority in the face of the great masters, whom he emulated, found compensation through the mediumistic consciousness. The anaesthetic of madness permitted him to do what in a normal state he would never have dared to attempt. The torture of decisions concerning his course as an artist was taken from him. Now Josephson, no longer hampered by excessive self-criticism—which had been an obstacle to him when he was sane—found the liberty to create out of his innermost self. By elimination of his judgement he came to a complete self-realization, finding in himself the world which he had not found outside or in others and gave it shape. It was schizophrenia which made an individual artist of him. An important question, already raised by H. Prinzhorn in *Die Bildnerei der Geisteskranken* (The Plastic Art of the Insane), is whether Josephson's creative power was heightened by his insanity. Today, when the distortions of expressionism and fauvism have become a convention and the antilogical attitude of the surrealist programme fills us with distrust, after the eye has



become accustomed to the formal world of a Picasso, the composition of Chirico, Miró, Dali, the answer to this question is relatively easy. Many of Josephson's last works show this intensification. They are flashes of imaginative genius, which were denied to him in his earlier work. Amongst his drawings are some in which the harmony of the general and specific elements, the harmony of the large and the small forms (details) is destroyed. Here the deformations impress us as insane. We miss the intermediate connexions. This applies both to the deformity of shapes and to the incongruity of the style. In Josephson's most important drawings we encounter a free, happy and apollonian mood.

Josephson's schizophrenia can also be regarded as a flight from his age into expressionism, into the realm of the unconscious, the uninhibited, the primitive. The schizophrenic is 'under the spell of the secret sense of everything perceptible. He feels himself to be in touch with the fundamental impulses of creation.'

Are Goya's *Caprichos*, Bosch's phantasies, Hokusai's *Spectres*, to be regarded as normal or as abnormal creations of the mind? Where is the borderline between the conscious and the unconscious? Does not a Picasso consciously attempt to produce in himself psychic states, which might enable him to penetrate this frontier? 'La différence qui existe entre les peintures de cet homme et celles des autres réside en ce fait que ceux-ci ont aspiré à peindre l'homme comme il est à l'extérieure, lui senta l'audace de le peindre comme il est intérieurement.' These words are not said about Picasso but are the words—by a contemporary of El Greco, Frey Joseph Siguença—about Hieronymus Bosch.

The ancestors of modern expressionism can be traced far back into the past and are to be found all over the world. To pass expressionism over in silence, as the French have done up till now, means to know only one-half of the truth.



H. H. PRICE

# BRITISH PHILOSOPHY BETWEEN THE WARS<sup>1</sup>

IN this lecture I shall try to give you a rough sketch of British philosophy in the period between the two World Wars. I shall be speaking mainly about philosophy in this country, but most of what I have to say would apply to the British Dominions too; and some of it, I think, would apply to the whole English-speaking world. I warn you at once that my sketch is highly selective. I shall leave out many things which a lot of people think important. You will hear not a word from me about Aesthetics, or about the Philosophy of History, and very little about Moral Philosophy. I shall talk almost entirely about Logic, Theory of Knowledge and Metaphysics. But obviously some selection is necessary, if the story is not to become entirely unmanageable.

Great changes occurred in philosophical opinion in this period; so great that one might say the whole climate of thought has altered (indeed, perhaps it has altered not once but twice). In what way those changes have been connected with changes in the world of politics and economics, in literature or in painting or music, I do not pretend to say. I am sure there has been some connexion, but I think it has been a complex and indirect one. I suspect that philosophical movements are seldom very closely connected with *contemporary* movements in politics or literature, or even in science. Of course, all philosophers have been influenced by the social and cultural environment in which they actually lived. But this influence is less great than some people think. Philosophers are academic persons who get their ideas from reading rather than from conversation; and the things they read with most attention are not usually this morning's newspaper, or even the book which was published the day before yesterday.

Again, it is true that any philosopher of note exerts some influence upon the thought and culture of his own contemporaries. But this influence too is less than one might think. For the books which philosophers write are difficult to understand, expressed in

<sup>1</sup>A lecture delivered at a Summer School in Oxford, July 1947.



complicated and sometimes novel technical terminology. Even in these days of universal education, their ideas permeate the mind of the general public rather slowly and in rather devious and indirect ways; and the full effect of them is felt, not by the philosopher's own contemporaries, but a generation or so later. For example, the philosopher's writings are first read by university students, who subsequently become the schoolmasters who in turn teach the novelists, journalists and politicians who will have the public ear twenty or thirty years later.

Therefore we must not be too hasty in seeking to correlate movements of philosophical opinion with other manifestations of the human mind or heart: not even when we are considering a period in which changes in philosophical opinion have been unusually rapid, or even revolutionary, as they have been in this one. The correlations are probably there, but they are complex and difficult to unravel and a certain *time lag* must be taken into account. It is not easy to see any very close connexion between Moore's theory of knowledge and the foundation of the League of Nations or the Russian Revolution.

At the beginning of the period which I am to discuss the philosophy known as *Absolute Idealism*, derived from the great German thinkers of the Romantic era, had been the dominating influence among British philosophers (and I think among American philosophers also) for about a generation.

Historians and archaeologists now tell us that in the century which followed the collapse of Roman civilization in Britain, there were two separate invasions of this island by Germanic tribes from the Continent, with an interval of fifty or sixty years between them. The first, though it did a lot of damage, was ultimately a failure; the second was a success. Something similar happened to the English-speaking world in the nineteenth century. There were two separate cultural invasions from Germany. The first happened quite early in the century. Coleridge and Carlyle in this country, and Emerson in America, were powerfully influenced by the German metaphysics of the Romantic period (whether for good or for ill or both, I shall not inquire).

But on the whole this first invasion produced little permanent effect. The native British philosophical tradition, derived from Locke and Hume, not only survived but even grew stronger. John Stuart Mill, whatever his weaknesses, is one of the greatest



figures in the history of British Empiricism. Students of post-Roman Britain, if there are any among you, will notice a paradoxical parallel between Mill and Arthur, who is supposed to have defeated the first Germanic invasion of Britain! However that may be, Mill's *Logic*, his *Utilitarianism*, and—not least—his *Essay on Liberty*, are all philosophical classics. And when he makes mistakes (as he frequently does) his mistakes are classical too. For, as one of his severest critics has admitted, 'at least Mill wrote clearly enough to be found out'.

Mill's work, however—like Arthur's—was undone again a few years after his death. There was a second philosophical invasion from Germany in the 1870s and 80s, and this one was a much more serious matter. It was not just an invasion, but a conquest. Its chief stronghold in this country was Oxford—Green, Bradley, Caird and Bosanquet were all Oxford men—and to this day the philosophical movement which resulted, the 'Absolute Idealist' movement, is still sometimes called 'Oxford Idealism'. It is also sometimes called 'English Hegelianism', though as a matter of fact its inspiration came from Kant as well as from Hegel; and it was as much American as English—Josiah Royce at Harvard was one of its most distinguished exponents. Moreover, although German in origin, it adapted itself to its environment, as other invaders of this country have had to do. It assimilated a good deal of our native philosophical tradition. And even when it could not, it assumed a kind of protective colouring which made it seem less alien than it really was. The most curious example of this is Bosanquet's political philosophy, in which the Hegelian theory of the State is represented as a highly respectable form of English Liberalism. Moreover—and this is not just a matter of protective colouring—in the philosophy of F. H. Bradley, the most original and independent thinker of this group, there is a strong streak of empiricism, and even of scepticism. Bradley was no Rationalist metaphysician of the old deductive type, nor even of the Hegelian dialectical type. He firmly, and even ferociously, protested against attempts to reduce the Universe to 'a ballet of bloodless categories'. He had a very keen and unprejudiced eye for the empirical facts of psychology. You will find in his *Appearance and Reality* a Neutral Monist theory of the self, not unlike the theory later advocated by James and Russell. In his *Principles of Logic* there are acute and original criticisms of the traditional



doctrine of the Syllogism, of the Subject-Predicate Logic, and of the traditional theory of Induction.

There was another feature of the Idealist movement which must not be forgotten—a feature more marked in Oxford than elsewhere, but present in some degree wherever Idealistic influence penetrated—and that was its profound interest in Ancient Greek philosophy, and especially in Plato and Aristotle. Here again it was in a way adapting itself to our native traditions. In this country there had long been an intimate alliance between Philosophy and Classical Scholarship. Ever since the Middle Ages it had been our habit to look upon the ancient Greek thinkers, not just as subjects for antiquarian research who lived a very long time ago, in a society quite different from ours; but rather as if they were very intelligent contemporaries of our own, whose theories and arguments were of *philosophical* and not just of historical interest, and who had as much—or more—to teach us as the authors who wrote the day before yesterday. It had been our habit to ask whether the arguments of Plato and Aristotle are valid or invalid, whether their conclusions are true or false, and what light they might throw upon the philosophical problems of our own time.

Of course, this method has its dangers. If you look at ancient thinkers through modern spectacles, there will probably be some distortion. And the Absolute Idealist way of looking at them certainly did have this effect; Plato and Aristotle, and even the pre-Socratic thinkers such as Heraclitus, were represented as proto-Hegelians. All the same, it did make them come alive. They were treated as *thinkers*, and not just as museum-pieces. In other words, they were taken seriously, as men who had something very important to say. And I think this was a great gain to philosophical studies, whatever incidental errors of interpretation it may have involved. What is called the history of philosophy, if treated in a purely historical way, is of all subjects the most dreary and the most depressing. But treat it non-historically, as a kind of timeless debate between men of genius, in which Plato answers Hume, and Russell criticizes Aristotle; and then it becomes the greatest of all sources of philosophical insight and philosophical vitality.

I myself very much regret that at the present time this traditional way of regarding the great Greek thinkers is beginning to go out of fashion, even in Oxford. The result—and one can already see



it—is bound to be that intelligent persons, who are interested in philosophy and not in antiquarianism, will come to regard Greek Philosophy as a bore, to the great impoverishment of our own culture. Whatever defects there may have been in the Absolute Idealist school, it certainly did not make that mistake.

But all this concerns what one may call the pre-history of the period about which I am to talk to you. My main theme is the development of British philosophy during the last thirty years. In the first years of the period, just after the end of the first World War, the Absolute Idealist philosophy was already beginning to lose its hold. Even before 1914 there had been protests against it. The new Mathematical Logic of Russell and Whitehead was already before the world. *Principia Mathematica* had been published in 1910; Russell's *Principles of Mathematics* actually appeared in 1903, as did Moore's *Principia Ethica*. But these revolutionary works, which were destined to turn the English-speaking philosophical world upside down, had not as yet had much effect upon the general current of opinion. For the time being, the metaphysical works of Bergson, and William James' Pragmatist Theory of Truth, were much more influential. It was these writers—and perhaps we are now inclined to underestimate their greatness—who first shook the foundations of the Absolute Idealist structure: Bergson and James, and the Oxford logician Cook Wilson, though Cook Wilson's influence was almost entirely confined to his own university.

But though shaken, the structure still stood. And a very imposing structure it was: just how imposing, I can hardly hope to convey to those who were not brought up in it in their student days, as I was myself. The Absolute Idealist philosophy had an answer to every question; not always a wholly satisfying answer, but still it had one. No movement in the long and varied history of human thought was alien to it. It was prepared to assimilate them all, and give its own interpretation of them (I have already spoken of its attitude to Ancient Greek philosophy). It was interested in all forms of human experience: in Ethics and Politics and Sociology, as well as in Logic and Metaphysics; in Religion and Art and Literature, as well as in Science. Its Coherence Theory of Truth, and the doctrine of Degrees of Truth which went with it, enabled it to grade all the forms of human cognition in a series, with sense-experience at the bottom and Metaphysics



at the top. Pure Mathematics, for example, might be an exceedingly abstract study, very far removed from that concreteness which characterized the highest sort of truth. But still there was *some* truth even in Pure Mathematics. In Physics, which is less abstract, there was a little more truth, and in Biology much more still. Even in sense-experience itself, which came at the very bottom of the ladder, there was just a little truth, though very little indeed.

Thus this philosophy provided a home for everything and everybody. The mathematicians and physicists, and still more the student of Sense-perception, might find the quarters assigned to them rather more humble than they expected. But still they were not left out in the cold, even though they did not receive quite such a hearty welcome as they might have wished. In short, the Absolute Idealist philosophy was itself a coherent and organic structure, as its own theory of Truth demanded; and as its theory of Truth also demanded, it was 'comprehensive' as well as coherent. A distinguished Cambridge thinker, himself one of its severest critics, has said of this philosophy that 'if it was not clear, at least it was not thin'—as some of its successors, perhaps, have tended to be. We cannot be surprised at the fascination which it exercised over the minds of intelligent and educated men.

And certainly in the years immediately after the first World War its influence—in British universities at least—was still very strong, even though there was already considerable opposition. Almost all students of philosophy were still brought up on the writing of the Absolute Idealist philosophers—Bosanquet's *Logic*, for example, and Bradley's *Appearance and Reality*—and the history of philosophy was still studied through Idealistic spectacles. Opposition there was, and the student heard something about it; all the same, in 1918 it had not yet crystallized itself into an opposing philosophical school.

But very soon it did. In the early 1920s, the outlines of an alternative philosophy, commonly known as 'Realism', began to be discernible. It is true that some of the most important writings of this school had been published some time before this period. (In the history of philosophy, as in other sorts of history, there are overlaps between one phase and another, and it is very difficult to say just when a new movement began or an old one ended.) Moore's paper *The Refutation of Idealism* indeed came out in 1903.



Russell's *Problems of Philosophy*—which is incidentally about the best introduction to the Theory of Knowledge ever written—appeared in 1912, and his Lowell Lectures on *Our Knowledge of the External World* in 1914. In Oxford, Cook Wilson's philosophy, which might be described as a conservative form of Realism, was already well known, and his disciple Prichard had published a vigorous attack on Kant's Theory of Knowledge in 1909. But these writings did not produce their full effect at once. One reason for this was the long interruption of academic studies during the first World War. Another was that these works were so different in outlook, in method, and even in style from the writings of the Idealist school. They had to be assimilated and digested at leisure, and a new academic generation had to grow up before they could be fully appreciated. I think that if we can talk of schools and periods at all, the Realistic period in British philosophy began about 1920 and lasted until the early 1930s. At any rate, during that decade the Realistic movement was the predominant philosophical influence in this country, and I think in other English-speaking countries as well. After that, a new and still more radical movement arose, which I shall come to later.

A mere ten or twelve years is a very brief period in the long history of human thought. Can it have produced anything of permanent importance? It is much too early to give an answer; we must leave that to our successors. But at least we can say that it was a period of intense intellectual activity, and to those who lived through it a very exciting one. Its leading figures were men of great ability, and they produced a surprisingly large amount of first-rate work. It will be enough to mention the names of Moore, Russell, Stout, Alexander, Dawes Hicks and Broad in this country; and of Perry, Holt and Lovejoy in America. (Whitehead, at least at the time when he wrote *The Concept of Nature* was also a member of the Realistic school.)

I must now try to give a sketch of the main features of this movement. The Realist philosophers were interested primarily in the Theory of Knowledge, rather than in Metaphysics. It was not that they were actually hostile to Metaphysics, as their Positivistic successors have been. Indeed Alexander, one of the leaders of the movement, made the Realist theory of knowledge the foundation of an elaborate metaphysical system, in his ingenious but not very easily believable book, *Space Time and Deity*. Whitehead, too,



eventually developed into a metaphysician. But broadly speaking the Realists were rather shy of metaphysics. This was because they were shy of systems as such. They preferred a more piecemeal method of philosophizing. They supposed—rightly or not—that philosophical problems are not nearly so interdependent as the Idealists had maintained, and could safely be tackled one at a time.

It is true that they were interested in Moral Philosophy, which perhaps lends itself more easily than some other branches of Philosophy to this policy of 'dividing to conquer'. I have already mentioned Moore's *Principia Ethica*. And the very distinguished group of philosophers known as the Oxford Moralists are all disciples of the Oxford Realist Cook Wilson. I do not, however, intend to say anything more about the Moral Philosophy of the Realists, important and interesting as it may be. For their attitude to the problems of Moral Philosophy was really a consequence of their theory of knowledge. (They have indeed been criticized for turning ethical problems into epistemological ones.) Realism was fundamentally a theory of knowledge, whatever contributions this or that adherent of it may have made to other branches of philosophy.

What was this theory of knowledge? It was an *anti-subjectivist* theory. Its central contention was that knowledge is not construction, but discovery. What is known, the Realist says, is *independent* of the mind which knows it. The known object is simply there. It is what it is, and our knowing activities do not alter it in any way. They merely reveal it. The only alteration they entail is an alteration in the knowing subject, who has been freed from the ignorance, or the false beliefs, which he previously had.

All this may sound platitudinous. You may say it is nothing but common sense. The Realists would have agreed with you. One of their claims was precisely that they were returning to sober common sense after a long period of philosophical intoxication. And may I remind you that platitudinous propositions are after all true?

Now this particular platitude, that the known object is independent of the knowing mind, was just what the Idealists had denied. There are, of course, ever so many different forms of Idealism. But they all agree in maintaining that the known is *not* independent of the knowing mind. Reality, they say, is



constructed in one way or another by the mind that knows it: wholly constructed by it, according to most Idealists. And even Kant, the greatest, as he is also the most moderate, of all the Idealist philosophers, maintained that the understanding prescribes laws to Nature, and that Space and Time are imposed upon the world by our own perceptive faculties. Thus even in Kant's philosophy the basic structure of Nature is the work of the knowing mind, though the details are not.

It is true that in most Idealist philosophies the mind which wholly or partly constructs the world is not the mind of you or me. It is Mind with a capital M (I am sorry I cannot tell you clearly what that means), a kind of universal mind which somehow works in or through our finite intelligences. But still they did all maintain that reality was somehow constructed by or dependent upon the cognitive activities of the knower. Indeed that is just what Idealism, in the philosophical sense of the word, consists in.

So when the Realists asserted these harmless-looking propositions—that knowledge is not construction but discovery, and that the known object is as such independent of the knowing mind—their thesis did not seem platitudinous at all. On the contrary, it was a bold and shocking paradox, a fundamental challenge to the prevailing philosophical opinions. It is a measure of their achievement that nowadays this notion of knowledge does seem platitudinous to nearly everybody, as it ought to.

Not only did the Realists return to a common-sensical conception of knowledge. They also returned to a common-sensical conception of truth and falsity. The Idealist theory of truth was the Coherence Theory, as I have said. The Idealists held that a true proposition is one which coheres with others in an organic system. Despite the drearily high-falutin' metaphors in which it has usually been expounded, I do not think we have yet heard the last of this queer theory of truth; it certainly has merits, as well as defects. At present however I am not concerned with either. I am only concerned to point out that the Realists rejected it. Instead, they held a Correspondence Theory. They returned to the view of the plain man that a true proposition is one which corresponds with the facts or agrees with Reality, while a false proposition is one which discords with the facts. If asked how we are to discover whether this or that proposition does correspond with the



facts, they replied by drawing a sharp distinction between knowledge and belief or opinion. The Correspondence Theory applies only to Belief and Opinion. It does not apply to knowledge at all. There is no question of returning to the old and vicious doctrine of 'Representative Ideas'. What we *believe* or *opine* corresponds with Reality, or discords with it, as the case may be. But what we *know* does not correspond with Reality. It *is* Reality. The whole point about knowledge is that in knowledge the facts themselves are directly present to us. Here again the Realists were returning to common sense. The plain man would agree that it is self-contradictory to say 'X knows A is B but in fact A is not B'; whereas it is never self-contradictory (though it may be false) to say 'X *believes* that A is B but in fact A is not B'. Another platitude? Yes, certainly; but I must remind you again that platitudes are also truths. And this one, like the others I have mentioned, had been implicitly denied by the Idealist logicians, who used the ambiguous word 'judgement' to cover knowledge, opinion and belief all at once, as if there was no difference between them. I think we are well rid of that word, the more so because by this time it had acquired a somewhat emotive flavour.

Such were the basic principles of the Realist theory of knowledge. Let us now see how they were applied. They naturally led to Realistic theories of perception, of memory, of thinking and even of imagination. In each of these forms of cognition the Realist tendency was to maintain that the mind has direct access to Reality. But the result of this was that Reality turned out to contain some very queer entities whose existence had not previously been suspected. And so the Realist theory of knowledge, in spite of itself, developed into a kind of ontology, and its conclusions were much less common-sensical than its beginnings.

For example, it was argued that in thinking, even in erroneous thinking, there is always something that the thinking mind is directly aware of. I may believe quite falsely that there is a cat on the mat. There may in fact be no cat there at all. But there is something before my mind, all the same, when I believe this. The words 'cat', 'mat' and 'on' stand for *universals* which I am being aware of. Unless they did, I should not be thinking at all; I should merely be uttering noises to myself, aloud or in auditory imagery. These universals, according to the Realist, are objective entities, though not sense-given ones. This, of course, is a return not to



common sense, but to Plato, and Aristotle; though more stress was laid on universals of relation (such as 'on' and 'between') which had been somewhat neglected by the ancients. Such objective universals are not *very* queer entities. At any rate every student of philosophy had encountered them before, whether he approved of them or not. But other entities soon began to be heard of, which were a good deal queerer. It was maintained that there were objective *possibilities*, as well as objective universals. When we say 'it may be raining in London now' we are not just expressing ignorance but rather knowledge. We are being aware of an objective possibility. Even though this possibility is not in fact actualized, yet it is somehow there, in the nature of things, and the thinking mind is aware of it. There is the possibility of rain in London now, even though not a drop is actually falling. There is nothing subjective about it; it is an objectively real or subsistent entity, which we have been fortunate enough to discover.

Some Realists went even further. They maintained that there are *objective falsehoods*. (In this they were following the Austrian logician Meinong, one of the few Continental philosophers who influenced the British Realist movement.) When you make a false statement to me, I understand it even though I may disbelieve it. Indeed, I could not disbelieve unless I understood. Again, I understand statements of yours which I neither believe nor disbelieve. What is this understanding? According to these philosophers, it too is a kind of knowing. What then is it that I am knowing? Not a fact, for your statement may be false, and yet I understand it perfectly; and granted that it is true, still I may not know the fact which makes it true. What I am knowing, then, is a peculiar sort of entity; neither a fact on the one hand, nor a mere set of words—a sentence—on the other. It is an *objective proposition*, a timeless intelligible entity, which somehow subsists in a world of its own, along with an infinite multitude of other objective propositions. This subsistent world is a 'third realm', neither mental nor physical, neither spatial nor temporal, accessible to thought though not to sense; indeed it is *the* object of thought *par excellence*. False propositions, as well as true ones, are denizens of this subsistent world; and Logic is the study of its structure. This is a strange and fascinating theory, in some ways more Platonic than Plato himself. But certainly it is very remote from common sense, and very difficult to believe in a cool hour. We



cannot deny that subsistent propositions are very queer entities indeed, and ever since they were first heard of, philosophers have been busy trying to get rid of them.

I shall now say something about Realistic theories of Perception. The problems of Perception and the External World interested the Realist philosophers more than anything else, so much so that some people think (mistakenly) that Realism just *is* a theory of perception. There is something peculiarly British—or I had better say, peculiarly Anglo-Saxon—about this preoccupation. It has been one of the main interests of English-speaking philosophers ever since the time of Locke. I have been told that Continental philosophers find this national pastime of ours very puzzling; and I have heard one of them suggest that it is connected in some way with the Wordsworthian attitude to Nature, and with our national taste for landscape painting. Perhaps there is some connexion (if there is, it is nothing to be ashamed of). But for my part, I find it puzzling that so many Continental philosophers are *not* interested in perception at all, and prefer to spend their lives talking about dreary subjects like *Kulturphilosophie*.

However this may be, it is certain that the Realists had a great deal to say about the problems of perception and the external world. Many different theories were put forward on this subject, and I cannot possibly describe them to you in detail. But however much they differed, there was one characteristic which was present in them all: the farther they went, the less common-sensical they became. And here again they were led to introduce queer entities of one kind or another, which their successors (rightly or wrongly) have been trying ever since to get rid of.

It soon became clear that Naïve or Direct Realism, the theory that in sense-perception we are knowing material objects by direct acquaintance, is a very difficult view to maintain. What is to be done about illusion and hallucination; about the phenomena of reflection and refraction; about the effects of disorders in our sense-organs or central nervous system; or even about perspective? In this difficulty, it seemed that two main alternatives were open to us. On the one hand, we may retain a more or less common-sensical conception of what a material object is, and a more or less common-sensical conception of physical space. But if we do this, we shall have to say that the external world itself is not an object of direct awareness, as the plain man claims it is. What we are



directly aware of in sensation will be just *sense-data* or *sensa*, which are somehow manifestations or appearances of material objects. And then our knowledge of material objects becomes a puzzle, as it did for Locke long ago. We begin to suspect that it is not really knowledge at all, but only belief or opinion. If so, what evidence have we got for it? The evidence must somehow come from sense-given correlations between the sense-data or appearances themselves. But just what this evidence is, and what degree of cogency may rationally be assigned to it, are very puzzling questions. Indeed, even the very *conception* of a material object begins to appear puzzling. How do we come to possess such a conception at all, if we have never been acquainted with an instance of it? Can it be that the conception of 'material object' is an innate idea, as the old seventeenth-century Rationalists supposed; or is it perhaps an *a priori* category in the manner of Kant? But if we say that, where shall we end? There are similar puzzles about physical space and its relation to the 'private' or sensible spaces given in sense-experience. Such considerations took the Realists farther and farther away from the common-sense philosophy with which they began. The external world retreated behind a veil or screen of sense-data. Realism was in danger of turning into scepticism or agnosticism. The way was being prepared for a return to Berkeley and perhaps to Kant.

The other expedient was the one adopted by Russell. Roughly speaking, we retain the common-sense contention that we are directly aware of the external world, or at least of some constituents of it. Appearances, the data of sensation, we say, are the ultimate constituents of matter. But then we have also to maintain that the external world is a much queerer place than the plain man (or indeed the plain philosopher) has hitherto supposed. It actually *consists* of appearances, including the ones commonly regarded as illusory. What common sense calls a 'thing' is not the simple entity we usually take it to be, with one shape and one size, located in a three-dimensional Euclidean space. What we call 'its shape' is really a class of many different sensible shapes, its size a class of many different sensible sizes. It is in fact a vastly complicated system of many—indeed infinitely many—different appearances related to each other in very complicated ways. And the space in which it lives is a space of six dimensions. This theory, which reduces, or exalts, the 'thing' of common sense into a



multitudinous group of differing appearances, is not only strange and bewildering to the plain man; it has another and still more paradoxical consequence. In order to be workable, it has to introduce the queer notion of *unobserved appearances* or 'unsensed sensibilia'; since the appearances which are actually presented to us in sensation are far too few and fragmentary to provide what is needed. I believe that something can be done to make this notion more acceptable. But we cannot wonder that subsequent philosophers have wished to get rid of such queer entities. And here again the way was being prepared for a return to the Phenomenalism which was long ago suggested by Berkeley.

I shall say no more about the detailed contention of the Realist philosophers. But before I leave them, I want to mention some general features of the Realist school. The first was its interest in science, particularly in the physical and mathematical sciences. Some of the Realist philosophers, especially some of the Cambridge Realists, were men of high scientific attainments. When Russell or Broad write about the Theory of Relativity, they know what they are talking about. In spite of occasional exceptions, it is true, by and large, that science and philosophy had pursued separate paths ever since the end of the eighteenth century, and neither side knew or cared much about the other. The Realists put an end to all that. As a result of their work, the philosophy of science—and particularly the philosophy of Physics—has come to be one of the main preoccupations of philosophers; and the scientists, for their part, have come half way to meet their philosophical colleagues. I think that this has been a very great gain, and I believe it will prove to be a permanent one. The divorce between science and philosophy was not only an intellectual scandal; it was a very serious weakness in the whole fabric of Western culture.

Another remarkable feature which was common to nearly all the Realist philosophers was their *style*. They tried to write in clear and simple language, avoiding the grandiloquent metaphors which are often a mask for muddle-headedness. They rejected the principle, to which their Idealist predecessors had been too much addicted, that in order to be a philosopher one must write English as if it were German, and that in order to be profound one must necessarily be obscure. Not that they avoided technical terms. On the contrary, they introduced many new ones, and no philosopher can avoid it if he has anything new to say. But they did take great



pains to define their technical terms unambiguously. I think that this preference for plain, sober, intelligible English was one of the great merits of the Realists. And here again they were returning to the traditional habits of English-speaking philosophers. No philosopher has ever written more clearly or more elegantly than Hume; or if anyone has, it is Russell.

This matter of style is more important than might be supposed. There is an intimate connexion between philosophical style and philosophical method; and I wish finally to say something about the philosophical method of the Realist school. They did not at first formulate it explicitly. (A method is something which one uses long before one is clearly conscious of what it is.) But gradually, and especially after Moore had published his essay 'A Defence of Common Sense', they came to maintain that *analysis* was the fundamental task of Philosophy. A philosopher's job was not to establish conclusions about the universe, as the old metaphysical system-builders had supposed. His job was to analyse the fundamental beliefs of Science and Common Sense (including their unconscious or half-conscious assumptions) and to state them clearly and self-consistently. He had not to prove, for example, that space and time were 'unreal', as some metaphysicians had tried to do. He had not even to prove that they were 'real' either; it is perfectly obvious that there are many spatial and temporal facts which are known to all of us. But although we know these facts, we do not know their analysis; and that is what the philosopher has to find out. To put it another way, the task of the philosopher is not speculation, but clarification. And a philosopher must try to write in a clear style, not merely for aesthetic reasons, but because clarification is actually what philosophy consists in.

It is, however, a dangerous thing to formulate one's methods in black and white. For then it may strike other people, or even oneself, that one has not been altogether faithful to them. It was the explicit formulation of the Analytical Method, or the Analytic Conception of philosophy, which broke up the Realist school, and led directly to the rise of the new and still more radical movement, variously called Logical Positivism or Neo-Positivism or Logical Empiricism, which has been the dominant influence in English-speaking philosophy during the last twelve or fifteen years.

I will end by giving a rough sketch of the aims and achievements



of the Logical Positivists. This is a very difficult task. The Logical Positivist school is not nearly so unanimous as its critics suppose. Indeed I am not sure that it should be called 'a school' at all. And what it has produced is a change in the general climate of philosophical opinion, an altered attitude towards the whole body of philosophical problems, rather than a set of clear-cut answers to them. But the chief difficulty which confronts me, in trying to describe this movement, is of course the fact that we are living in the midst of it. The picture—if it is one picture and not many—will not be clearly visible until it can be viewed in historical perspective by our successors.

The Logical Positivist philosophy first became known through the work of a small and very able group of men commonly called 'the Viennese Circle'. It must not however be supposed that what I am going to describe is a third Germanic invasion of the English-speaking philosophical world. This time it was the other way round. The Viennese group, many of whom were mathematicians and mathematical logicians, were themselves disciples of Russell. The rise of the Logical Positivist movement was the long-delayed effect of Russell's logical discoveries. As I have mentioned already, *Principia Mathematica* had been published in 1910, and *The Principles of Mathematics* as long ago as 1903. But for a long time their relevance to the traditional problems of philosophy was not fully appreciated; it was not fully appreciated even by Russell himself. But now at last this harmless-looking time-bomb exploded, and even today we have hardly recovered from the shock.

Broadly speaking, the result was this. There was a *synthesis of Empiricism and Mathematical Logic*. Twenty years or more ago, a senior colleague of mine described Russell's theory of knowledge as 'mathematics imposed upon Hume'. This very acute remark is not altogether a just description of Russell's own philosophy, but I think it fits Russell's Positivistic disciples very well. It is curious to reflect that at the time when it was made the remark was taken as a damning criticism, and was so intended by its author. Nowadays, on the contrary, it would be taken as a compliment. The imposing of Mathematics and Mathematical Logic upon the epistemology of Hume is just what the Logical Positivists aimed at, and have to a large extent achieved. And as a result, the work of Hume himself has come to appear in an entirely new light. His



reputation has never stood higher than it stands today, two centuries after the publication of the *Treatise of Human Nature*. For generations he was the great boggy-man, the wicked and subversive sceptic, and it was the duty of all respectable philosophers to refute him. Besides, he wrote so clearly that what he said could not possibly be true. Today he is regarded as a philosophical genius of the very first order, the man who discovered the Problem of Induction and first propounded the theory that the Self is a logical construction. We have not to refute him, but rather to learn from him: to solve (if we can) the problems which he set us, and to restate his positive contentions in a less psychologistic terminology. For this new—and just—assessment of Hume's philosophical achievements we have to thank the Logical Positivists. And on this point at least, even their critics would admit that they were in the right.

But to return to the main theme of my story; how did this synthesis of Empiricism and Mathematical Logic come about? The classical Empiricists, from Locke to Hume himself, had never succeeded in showing how the *a priori* sciences, Pure Mathematics and Formal Logic, could be fitted into an empirical theory of knowledge. Indeed, they were not clearly conscious of the difficulty of fitting them in. They held that all knowledge is derived, in some sense, from experience. But in Mathematics and Formal Logic we have a body of propositions which experience can neither confirm nor refute; and yet it is certain that they are true. J. S. Mill's attempt to meet the difficulty, by arguing that the propositions of Pure Mathematics were just very well-established empirical generalizations, was not at all convincing; for these propositions are *necessary* truths, not mere truths of fact. Hence it was very widely held that the very existence of Pure Mathematics was a conclusive objection to the Empiricist theory of knowledge; and the most eminent philosophers in our universities were continually assuring their pupils that 'Empiricism was dead'. Mill, and even Hume himself, were treated as Aunt Sallies, whom any competent second-year student could easily knock down.

But now it was suddenly discovered that Mathematics and Logic could be reconciled with the Empiricist theory of knowledge after all. And it turned out that Empiricism was not dead by any means, but very much alive, and more vigorous—not to say aggressive—than it had ever been before. The *a priori* truths



of Mathematics and Logic, it was now said, are true because they are *tautologies* or *analytic propositions*. They are true *by definition*. They do not state facts about the world, not even very pervasive facts about its 'structure', as the Realists had supposed. They do not state facts at all, but are rules for the use of symbols. And that is why they can be neither confirmed nor refuted by experience; they are true whatever the empirical facts may be. On the other hand, all propositions which do give us information about the world are capable of being either confirmed or refuted by experience, exactly as the old Empiricist philosophers had maintained; or, if they are not susceptible to any such empirical test, they are not genuine propositions at all.

These contentions have the most radical consequences, and the Neo-Empiricists were not slow in pointing them out. Ethical propositions, for instance, seem at first sight to give information (for example, about our own duties or other people's rights). But they cannot be empirically verified or falsified. Sentences stating that an action is likely to have such and such consequences *can* indeed be so verified, or falsified. But though they often occur in ethical discussions, they are not strictly ethical statements; they are factual ones. Ethical statements are those which contain such words as 'ought', 'right', 'morally good'. And these cannot be empirically verified or falsified. But neither are they tautologies, like the statements of Logic and Pure Mathematics. Therefore—it was argued—they are not really statements at all, and are neither true nor false. They are just expressions of emotion, like smiling or shaking one's fist. Of course they are none the less important for that; but still they do not *state* anything, though they have the grammatical appearance of doing so. This is what is called the 'Boo-Hurrah' theory of Ethics; and a very similar account would be given of aesthetic statements containing words like 'beautiful', 'ugly', 'tragic', etc.

But this was not all. Not only traditional Ethics, but traditional *Metaphysics* also—including Metaphysical Theology—was ruthlessly de-bunked. The great metaphysical system-builders, from the Ancient Greek thinkers to our own day, have professed to tell us important facts about the universe, going far beyond the information which science, history and everyday observation can supply, and sometimes even contradicting it (as where time or matter were declared to be 'unreal'). They claimed to have learned



these facts not by means of experience, but by deductive reasoning. Indeed, for many ages it was supposed that this was the main task of a philosopher: a very difficult task, of course, and perhaps no one had yet been wholly successful in it, because the truth on such profound subjects is very difficult to discover; but still a very important task, perhaps the most important which the human intellect could attempt.

The Neo-Empiricists would have none of this. They did not argue that the conclusions of this or that metaphysician were false: for example, the statement that the universe is an organic whole, or that Reality is spiritual. In their view, the trouble was not that the metaphysicians had failed in the task they had set themselves, but rather that they never ought to have tried. What was wrong with the statements of the metaphysicians was not that they were false, but rather that they were not statements at all. For the sentences which the metaphysician offers us are certainly not tautologies, like the propositions of Mathematics and Logic. They purport to give us information about matters of fact. And yet we find that experience can neither confirm nor refute them. We must therefore conclude that they are pseudo-statements, which are not even false, but nonsensical. The whole idea of deducing conclusions about matters of fact from *a priori* premisses is just a muddle.

I do not want to ask whether this picture of traditional metaphysics is altogether fair. I think myself that it is not, and perhaps some of those who drew it would now be ready to admit this. But however that may be, one important result of the Neo-Empiricist movement has been to make the very possibility of metaphysical knowledge a problem. (Curiously enough, this is a return to one of the central contentions of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*.) The word 'metaphysical' is now almost a term of abuse. Hardly any reputable philosopher nowadays would dare to produce a metaphysical system. I can only think of one exception to this rule: Whitehead. But Whitehead's later and more metaphysical writings have hitherto had very little effect indeed upon professional philosophers. Posterity may think differently. I should not be very much surprised if he came to be regarded, two or three generations hence, as one of the greatest thinkers of the twentieth century. Be that as it may, the attitude of present-day philosophers to his work—an attitude not of hostility, but of



complete or all but complete indifference—is a measure of the effect which the Neo-Positivist attack on Metaphysics has produced.

But the builders of grandiose metaphysical systems were not the only victims. The Realists suffered too. It is true that—except for Alexander—they produced no systems. But they were tarred with the metaphysical brush all the same. Had they not introduced queer entities—objective universals, objective propositions, objective possibilities and the like—whose reality could not be verified by experience? This ‘subsistent world’, the alleged object of propositional attitudes such as supposing, doubting and believing, was clearly metaphysical, and must go. Even in their theories of perception, the Realists had introduced queer entities. There were the unsensed sensibilia of Russell. Obviously they must go too. The distinction between sense-data and material objects, which other Realists had drawn, fell under suspicion as well. For if we draw it, we are liable to think of material objects themselves as metaphysical or ‘transcendent’ entities whose existence cannot be verified by sense-experience. We are therefore bidden to adopt a Phenomenalist theory of the External World, according to which material-object-statements are equivalent to very complex sets of statements about sense experiences, actual and possible.

The most striking feature of the Neo-Empiricist philosophy, and the most novel, still remains to be mentioned. This is its tendency to transform philosophical problems into problems of language. We have already seen that the Realists when they came—rather late in the day—to formulate their conception of philosophical method, decided that the essential function of philosophy was analysis or clarification. The Neo-Empiricists accepted this. But they asked, exactly what is it that is to be clarified or analysed? Their answer was, *sentences* and other symbolic expressions, including those of Mathematics. And gradually it came to be thought that the essential function of philosophy is the clarification of language; and that *the* problem of philosophy *par excellence* was the problem of Meaning—in all the many senses of that ambiguous word. The language of common sense, even the language of the sciences, and above all the traditional language of philosophy itself, leads us almost inevitably into muddles and puzzles. And the philosopher’s task is to clear up those muddles (what else is there left for him to do, since he must not even



attempt to give us information about the universe?). For example, he must free us from the muddled assumption that because there are abstract nouns, there are therefore abstract objects, traditionally called 'universals'; or that because we all know how to use the first person singular, we are aware of an entity called the Ego. Indeed, some of the most influential members of the movement have concerned of philosophy not as a branch of knowledge at all, nor even as a search for knowledge, but as a therapeutic technique: a kind of psycho-analysis designed to cure us of the linguistically-generated 'cramps' or 'headaches' from which all reflective persons suffer more or less. And once we are cured, we shall not need to philosophize any more.

This brings me to the end of my story. The period which it covers is a very short one—only some thirty years. But we have come a long way in that short time; whether in the right direction or the wrong one, I shall not attempt to determine. From Bosanquet to Moore is a long step. From Bosanquet to Wittgenstein is a much longer one. A kind of philosophical revolution has occurred, and some of us are still not sure whether we are standing on our heads or our heels. Yet from another point of view it is not a revolution at all, but rather a restoration. For if we consider the whole history of philosophy in Great Britain and the other English-speaking countries from the seventeenth century onwards, we find that Empiricism—or perhaps we should say, more vaguely an empirical outlook—has been its most characteristic feature, and its most striking contribution to Western thought and culture. The Absolute Idealist period which began in the 1880s and lasted till the 1920s, was a brief and exceptional interlude in our intellectual history. In the last twenty-five years, we have returned to our native Empiricist tradition. And Russell, who has done more than any other thinker to bring us back to it (sometimes in spite of himself) is the lineal successor of Locke, Berkeley, Hume and Mill. Whether you like it or not, this renaissance of Anglo-Saxon Empiricism is an important event, and its effects will not be confined to the lecture-rooms of professional philosophers.



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This is one of the few occasions when a music organization has brought dollars into the country, and it is symptomatic of the Committee's influence abroad. Early this year, for instance, the Brussels Radio gave a broadcast on the Committee's activities. Budapest Radio is broadcasting some of the works the Committee has recommended. Radio Diffusion has sponsored a society in Paris that was formed out of a visit made by the Committee's Organizer, Francis Chagrin, and Dublin has responded to similar suggestions from the Committee by forming the Music Association of Ireland.

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